

DEFIANT

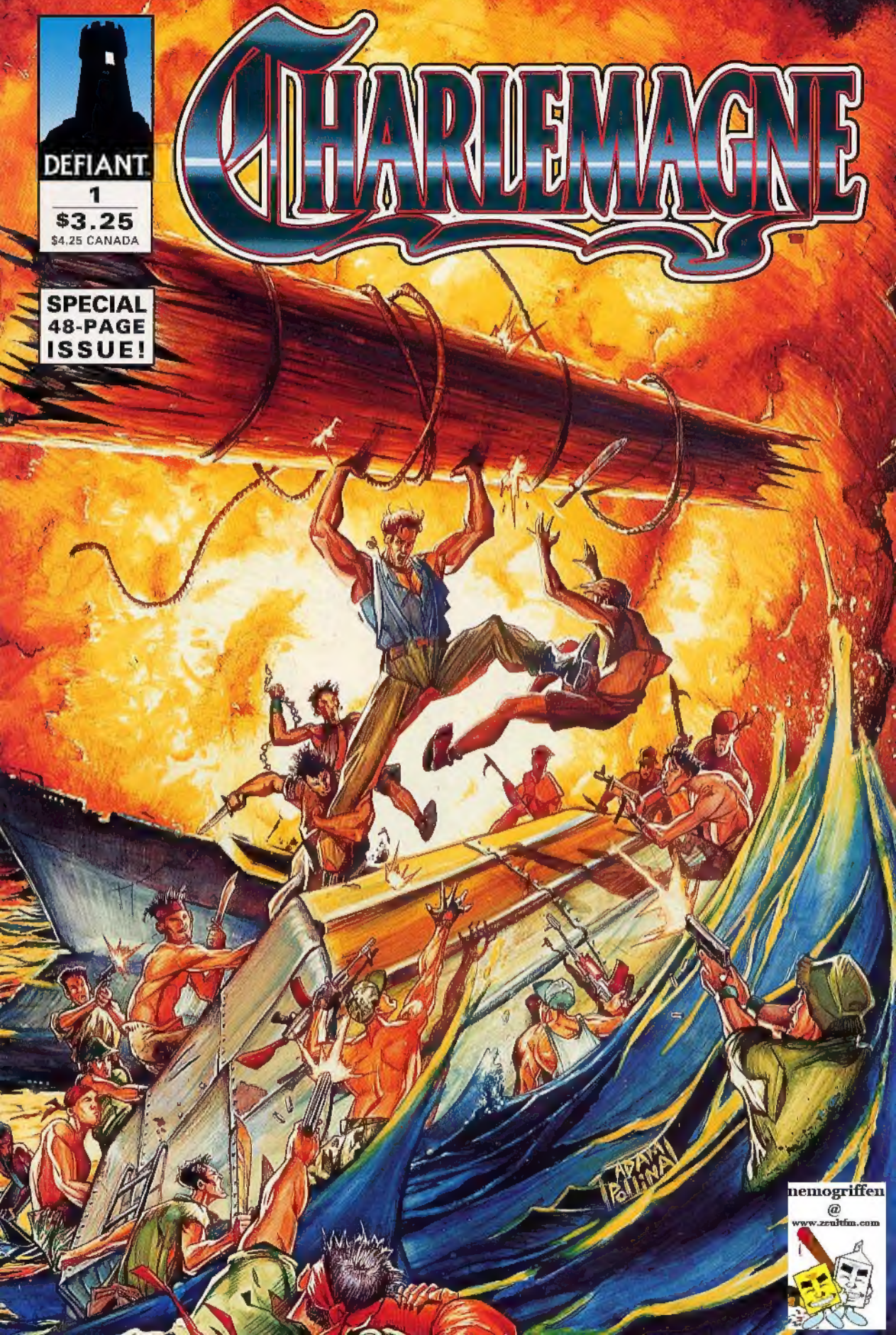
1

\$3.25

\$4.25 CANADA

**SPECIAL  
48-PAGE  
ISSUE!**

# CHARLEMAGNE



nemogriffen

@

www.zenitfm.com





OCTOBER 12, 1973.  
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY...

THE STATE MOTTO READS,  
"UNITED WE STAND,  
DIVIDED WE FALL."

THAT'S A PROVERB 12-YEAR-OLD  
CHARLES SMITH HAS KEPT IN HIS  
HEART FROM THE MOMENT HIS  
BROTHER LEFT FOR VIETNAM...

...AND WAS REPORTED  
MISSING-IN-ACTION.

IT'S OKAY TO MISS  
YOUR BROTHER, CHARLIE...  
BUT PETE WOULDN'T WANT  
YOU MISSING OUT ON A  
DAY LIKE TODAY!

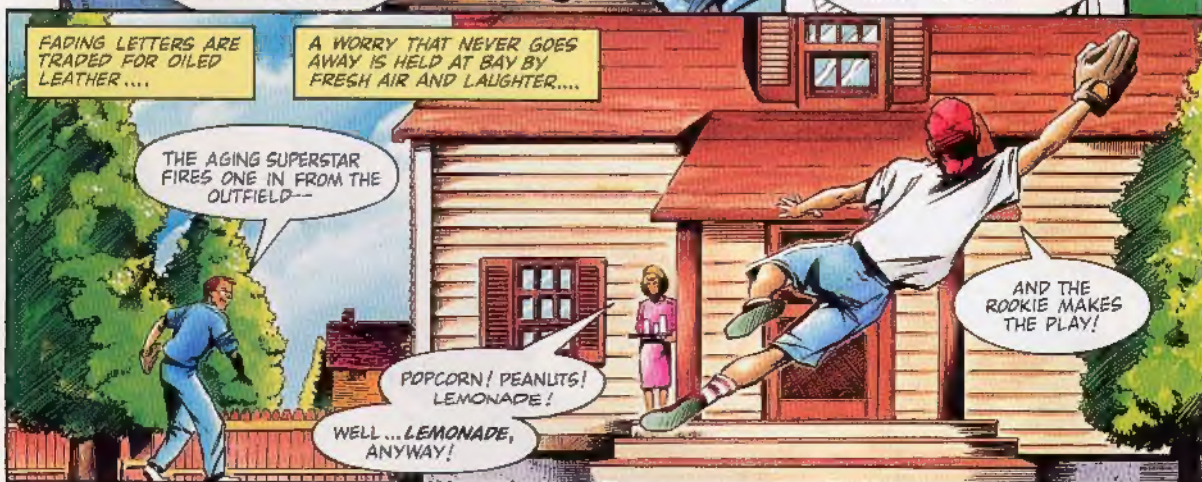
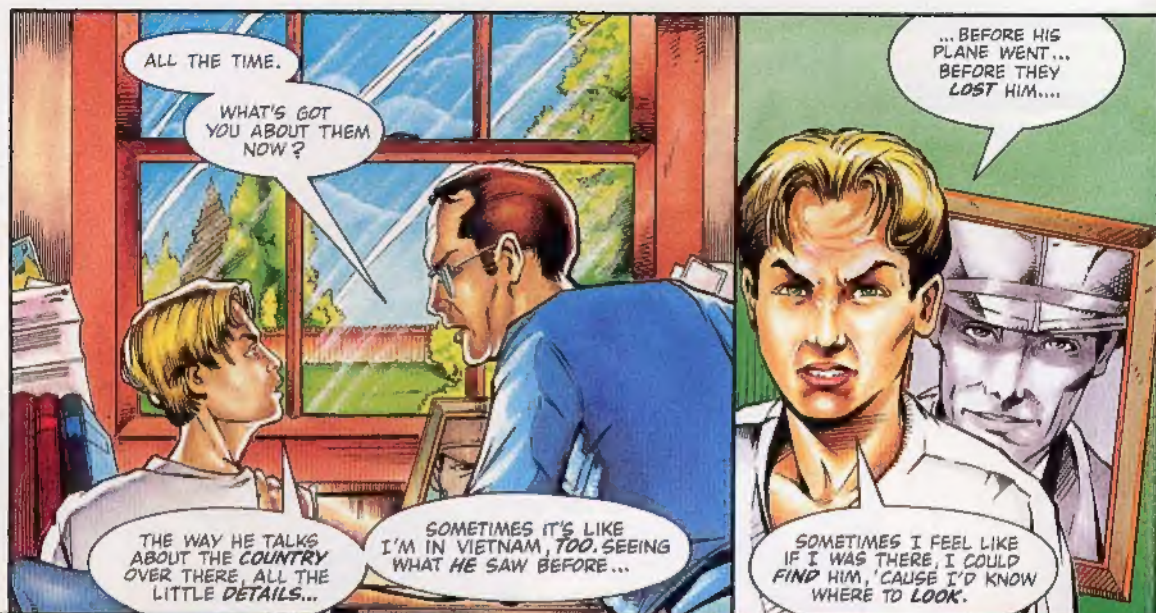
WHATTA YOU  
SAY? GET OUT  
THERE WITH THE  
OLD MAN, THROW  
ONE AROUND?

D'YA EVER  
READ HIS LETTERS,  
DAD?

PLOTTED BY JIM SHOOTER,  
PHILIP NUTMAN, ADAM ROLLINA,  
DEBORAH PURCELL, AND  
D.G. CHICHESTER  
WRITTEN BY D.G. CHICHESTER  
PENCILED BY ADAM ROLLINA  
INKED BY MIKE WITHERBY  
PAINTED BY OCLAIR  
LETTERED BY MINDY EISMAN  
EDITED BY DEBORAH PURCELL  
CREATED BY JIM SHOOTER  
AND DEBORAH PURCELL  
DEVELOPED BY JIM SHOOTER,  
DEBORAH PURCELL, AND  
ADAM ROLLINA

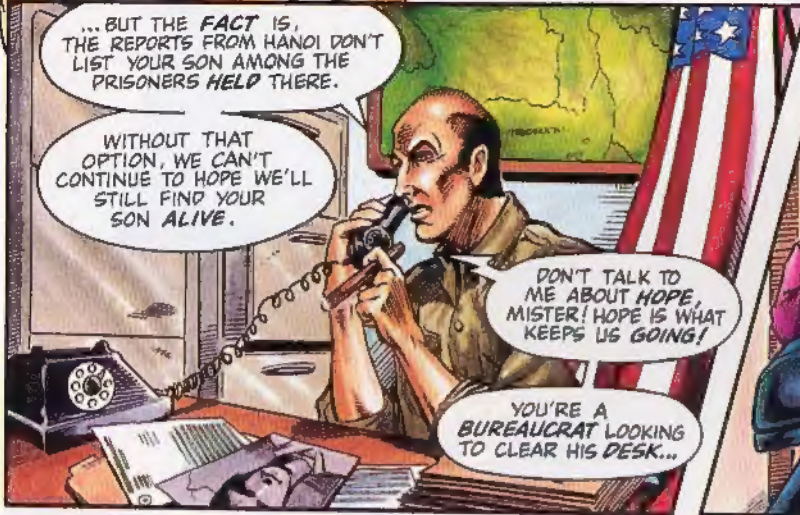
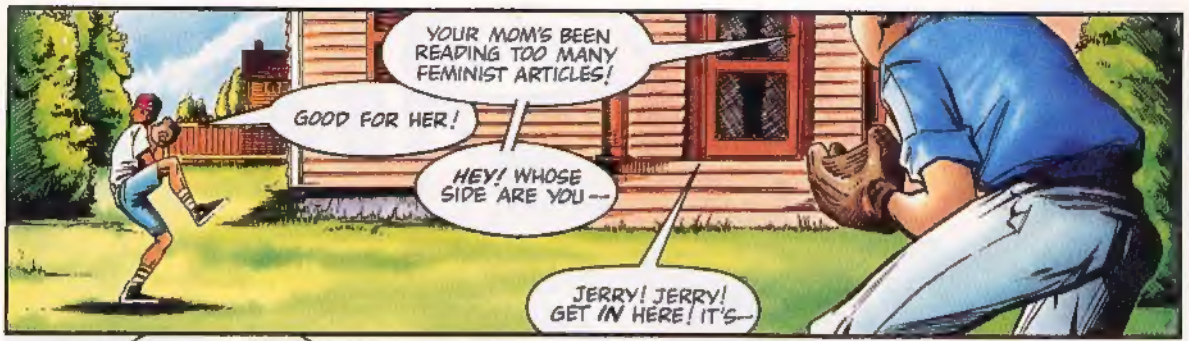
**FIRE WILL COME!!!**



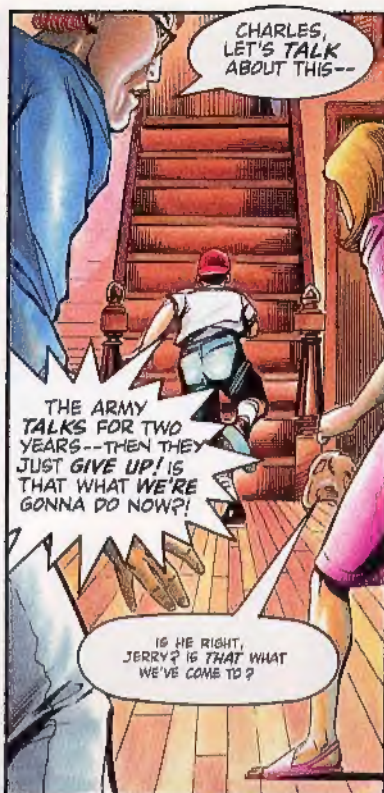


CHARLEMAGNE™ #1, March 1994. Published by DEFIANT™, a division of Enlightened Entertainment Partners, L.P., 232 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016. Jim Shooter, President; Winston Fowlkes, Publisher. Published monthly. Copyright © 1994 EEP, L.P. All rights reserved. Price \$3.25 per copy in the U.S. and \$4.25 in Canada. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any person living or dead or any institution is intended, and any such similarity that may exist is purely coincidental. The trademarks DEFIANT, ENLIGHTENED ENTERTAINMENT, and CHARLEMAGNE and all of the character names and likenesses featured herein are the exclusive property of EEP, L.P. PRINTED IN CANADA.

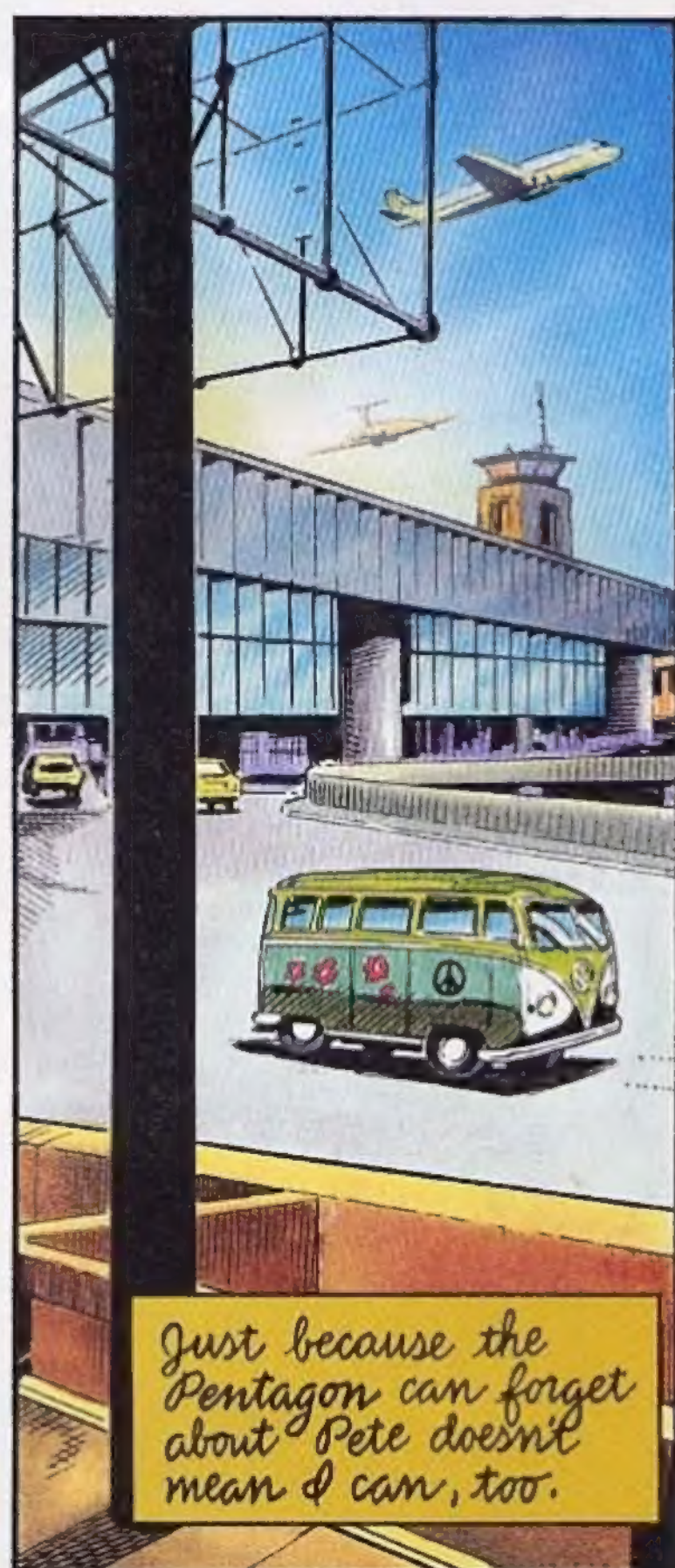
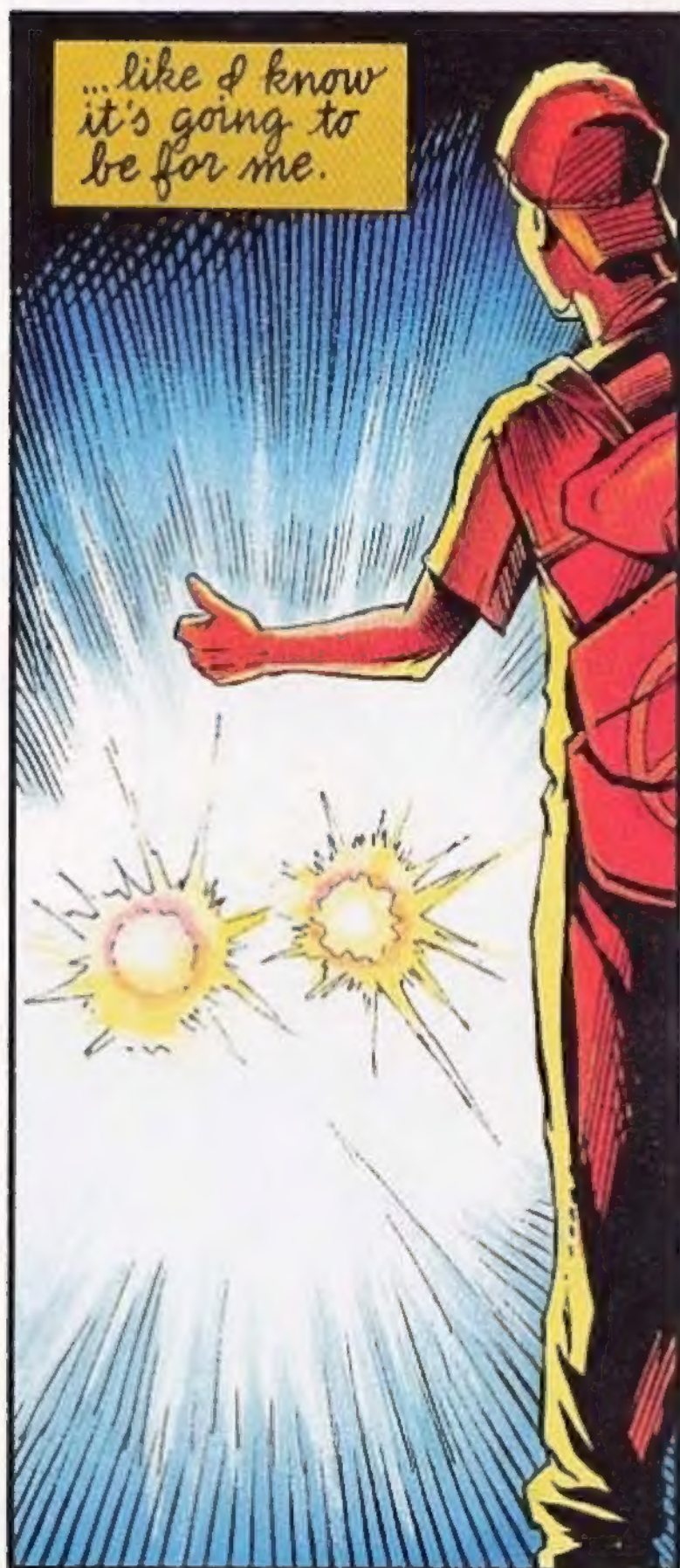












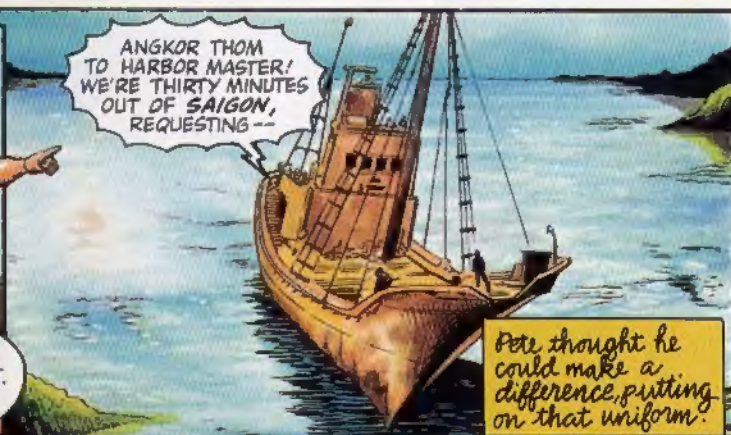




What makes me think I  
can find him, when the  
whole U.S. army couldn't?



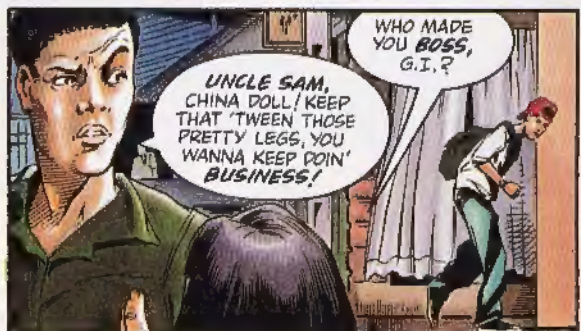
You brought me and Pete  
up to know we could do  
whatever we put our hearts into.



Pete thought he  
could make a  
difference, putting  
on that uniform.











NOTHIN' GOES DOWN WITHOUT MY SAY--

KID! YOU WORKIN' THE STREET, TOO? WE GOTTA TALK!

M-ME? N-NO, I'M--



GET BACK HERE! I SAID, GET--

...F-FIND PETE  
FIND PETE, AND,  
GET MYSELF  
OUTTA...



... WHEREVER I AM!

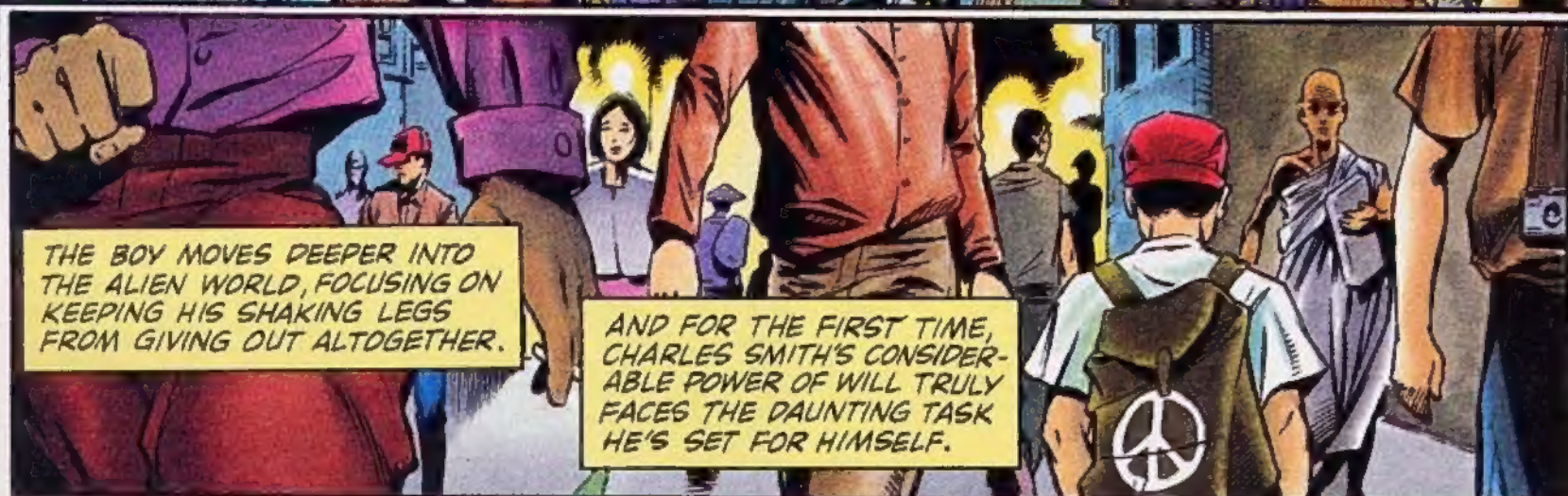
A FLOOD OF SENSATION HITS  
PUSHING CHARLES TO PANIC.

EXOTIC FOOD SCENTS AND  
BODY ODORS OVERWHELM.

THE CHATTER OF FOREIGN WORDS  
DROWN YOUNG EARS.

UNKNOWN FACES AND  
STRANGE FEATURES  
BLUR INNOCENT EYES.

HIDDEN ANIMALS CAW AND SNARL,  
RAISING THE HAIR ON THIN ARMS.



THE BOY MOVES DEEPER INTO  
THE ALIEN WORLD, FOCUSING ON  
KEEPING HIS SHAKING LEGS  
FROM GIVING OUT ALTOGETHER.

AND FOR THE FIRST TIME,  
CHARLES SMITH'S CONSIDER-  
ABLE POWER OF WILL TRULY  
FACES THE DAUNTING TASK  
HE'S SET FOR HIMSELF.





CONFUSING HOURS HOWL PAST,  
LEAVING HUNGER AND EXHAUSTION  
IN THEIR WAKE.



**KRAAM**

BLEEDIN' HEART,  
ANTI-AMERICAN  
SONUVA --

ALL I'M  
DOIN' IS ASKIN'  
THE QUESTION

"WHAT  
ARE WE DOIN'  
HERE IN THIS  
COUNTRY?!"



NOTHIN'  
WRONG WITH ASKIN' A  
QUESTION, IS THERE,  
JARHEAD?

ASK  
ALL YOU WANT,  
COMMIE LOVER! I  
GOT YER ANSWER  
RIGHT HERE....



HE'S GOT A  
KNIFE!



MAKIN' UP  
FOR WHAT YOU'RE  
LACKIN' IN OTHER  
DEPARTMENTS,  
MARINE?



HOW'S ABOUT  
WE JUST AGREE  
TO DISAGREE,  
HMM?

**FWRAAK**

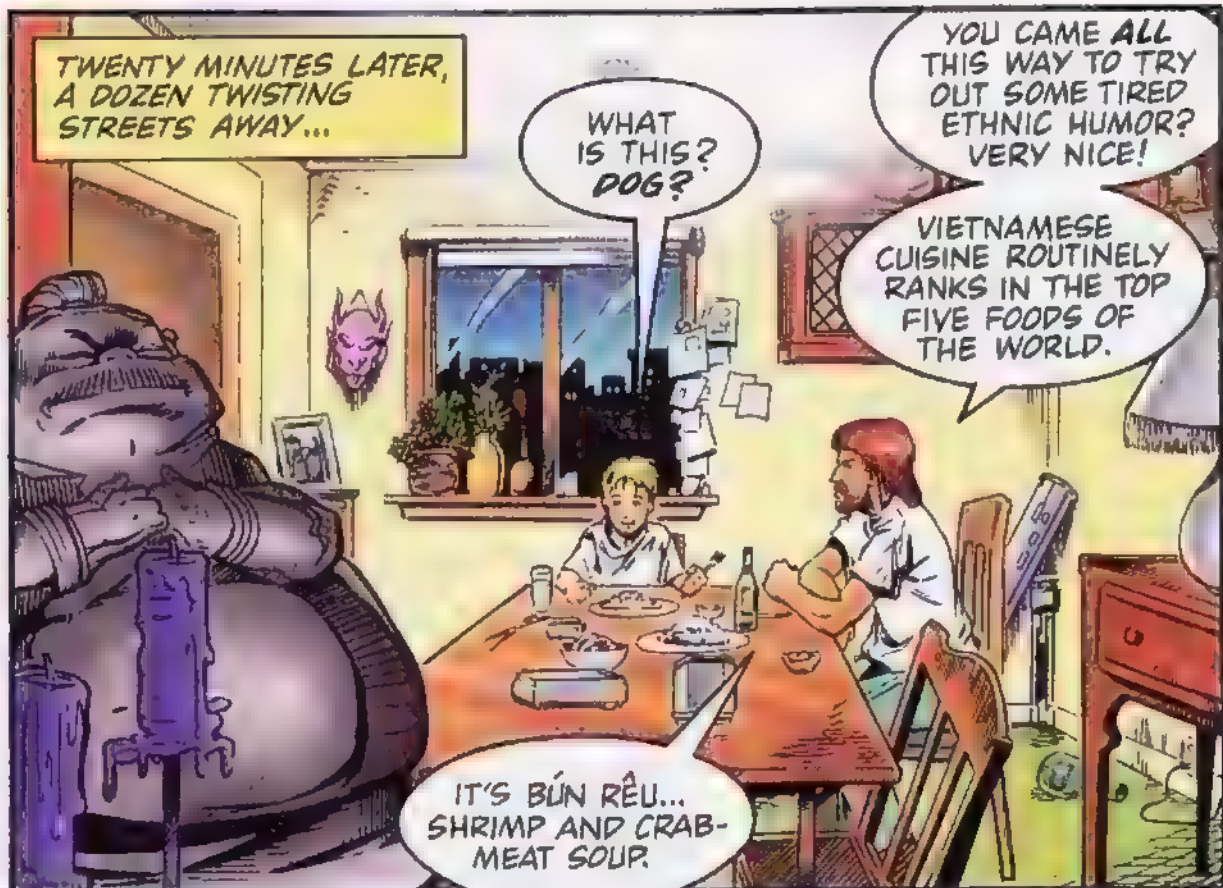




YOU GOT A GOOD SET O' LUNGS, KID-- SAVED MINE FROM GETTING RUN THROUGH, THAT'S FOR SURE!

NAME'S JERRY WESTERBERG. AND YOU MUST BE...

...HUNGRY?



TWENTY MINUTES LATER, A DOZEN TWISTING STREETS AWAY...

WHAT IS THIS? DOG?

YOU CAME ALL THIS WAY TO TRY OUT SOME TIRED ETHNIC HUMOR? VERY NICE!

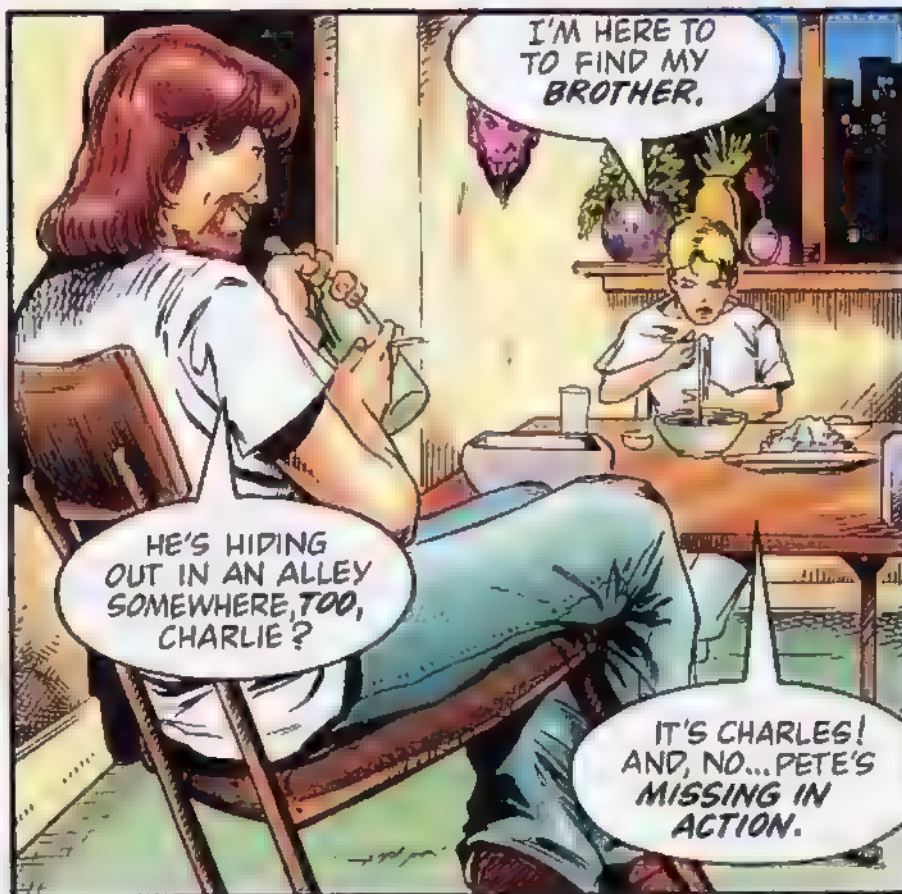
VIETNAMESE CUISINE ROUTINELY RANKS IN THE TOP FIVE FOODS OF THE WORLD.

IT'S BÚN RÊU... SHRIMP AND CRAB-MEAT SOUP.



I DIDN'T COME ALL THIS WAY TO TELL JOKES. I'M SORRY....

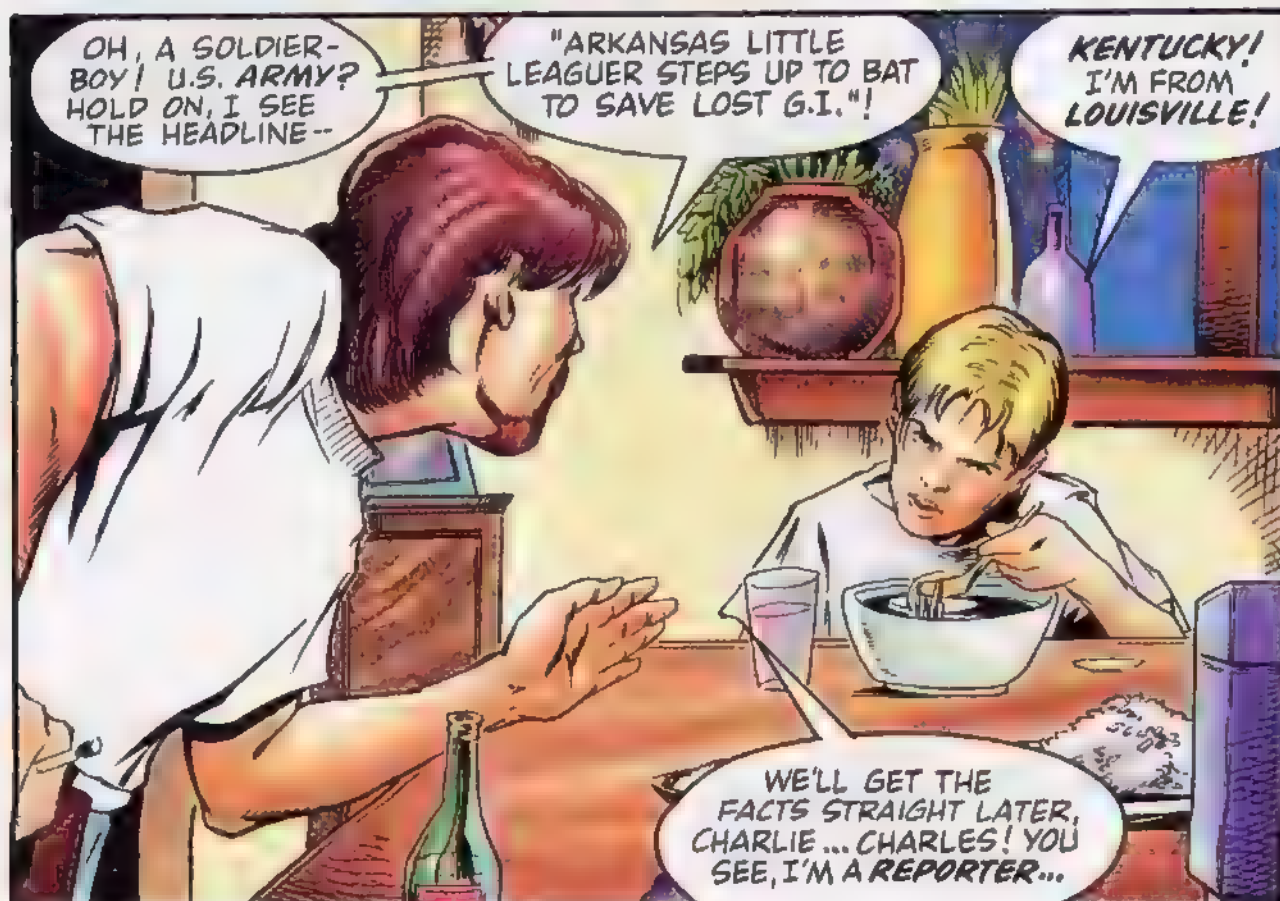
BUT I DIDN'T COME HERE FOR COOKING LESSONS, EITHER!



I'M HERE TO FIND MY BROTHER.

HE'S HIDING OUT IN AN ALLEY SOMEWHERE, TOO, CHARLIE?

IT'S CHARLES! AND, NO... PETE'S MISSING IN ACTION.



OH, A SOLDIER-BOY! U.S. ARMY? HOLD ON, I SEE THE HEADLINE--

"ARKANSAS LITTLE LEAGUER STEPS UP TO BAT TO SAVE LOST G.I.!"

KENTUCKY! I'M FROM LOUISVILLE!

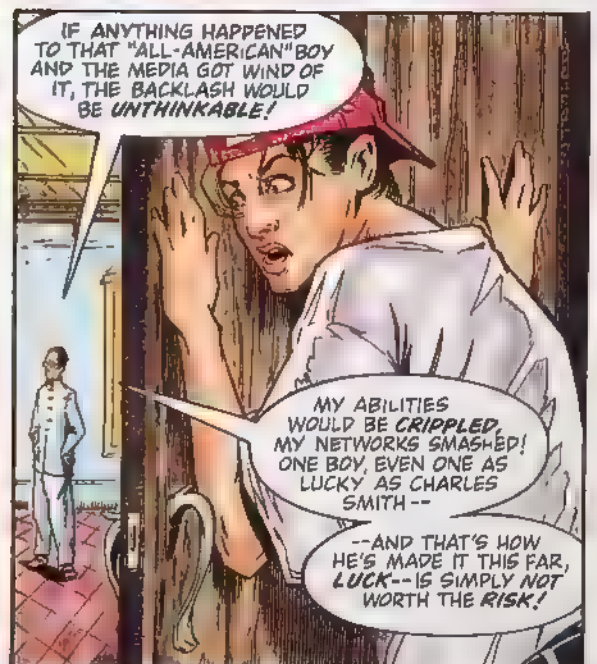
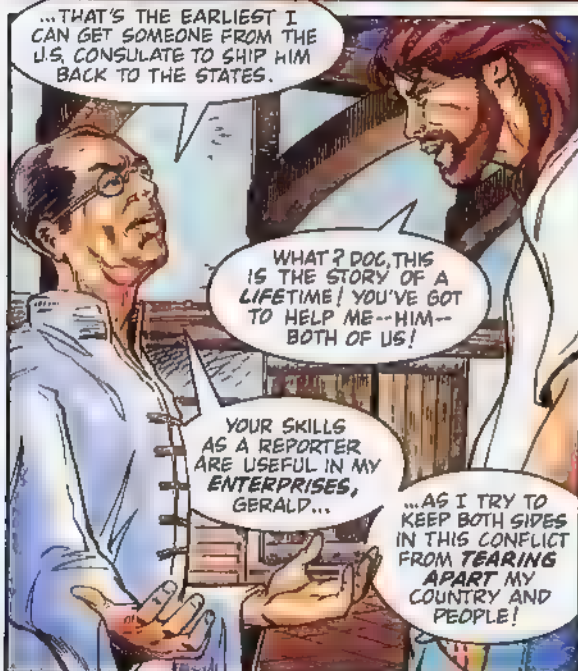
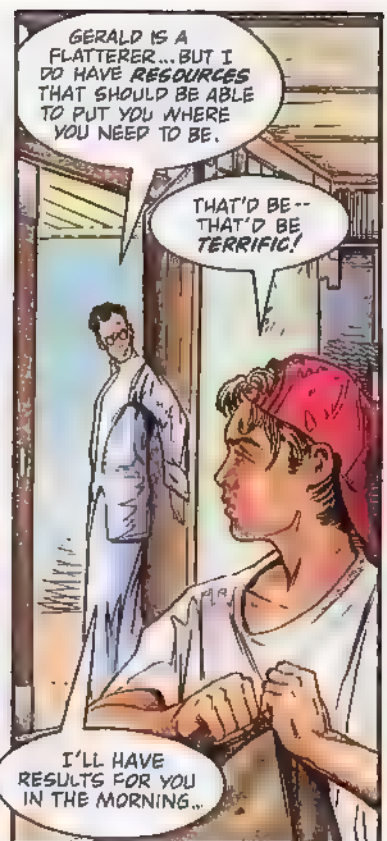
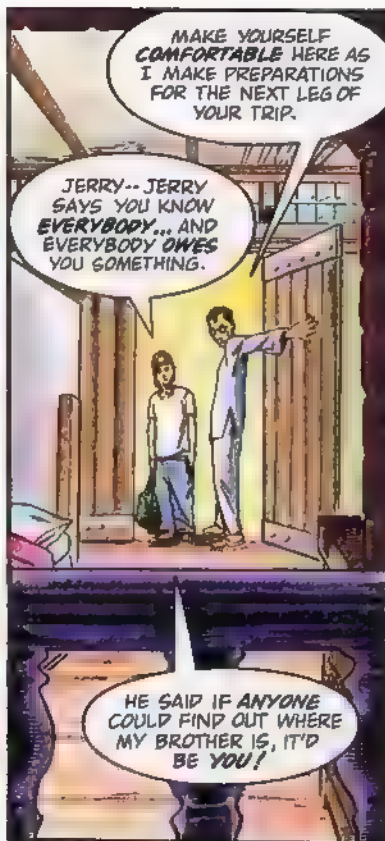
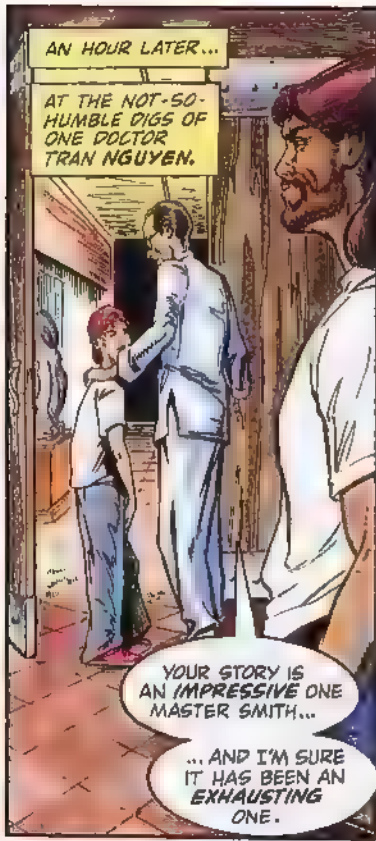
WE'LL GET THE FACTS STRAIGHT LATER, CHARLIE ... CHARLES! YOU SEE, I'M A REPORTER...



... AND RIGHT NOW I'M TRYIN' TO FIGURE WHERE I'M GONNA PUT MY PULITZER... AND WHERE I'M GONNA PUT YOU.

WE GOTTA GET YOU TO SEE DOC....

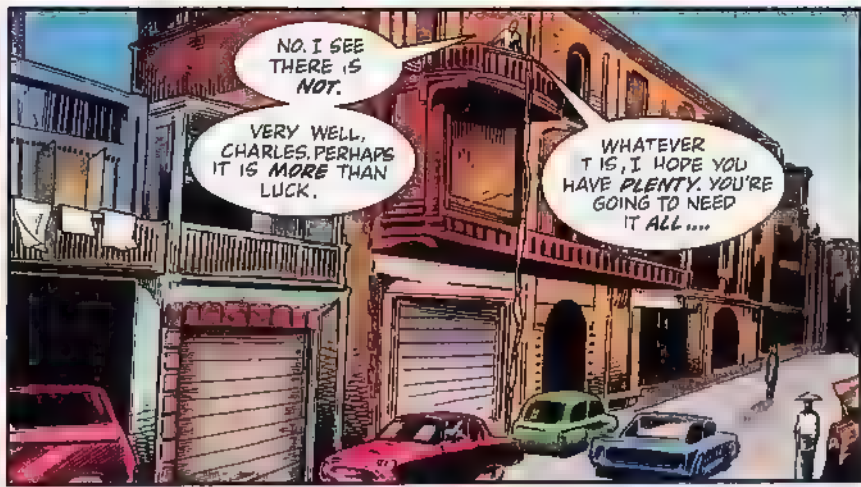








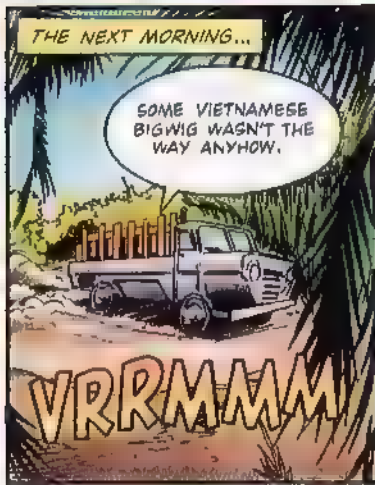
MASTER SMITH, IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I CAN GET FOR--



NO. I SEE THERE IS NOT.

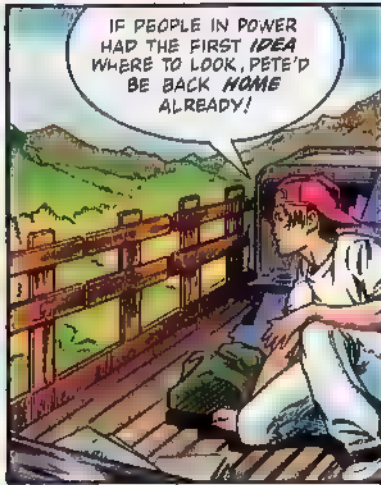
VERY WELL, CHARLES. PERHAPS IT IS MORE THAN LUCK.

WHATEVER IT IS, I HOPE YOU HAVE PLENTY. YOU'RE GOING TO NEED IT ALL ...

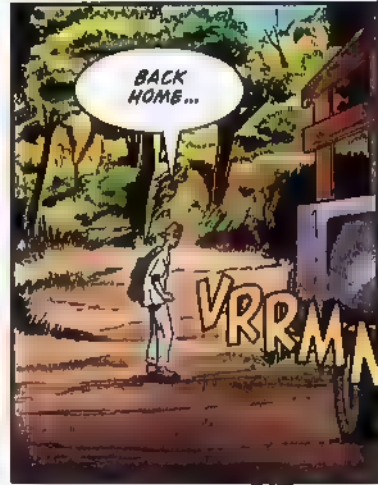


THE NEXT MORNING...

SOME VIETNAMESE BIGWIG WASN'T THE WAY ANYHOW.



IF PEOPLE IN POWER HAD THE FIRST IDEA WHERE TO LOOK, PETE'D BE BACK HOME ALREADY!



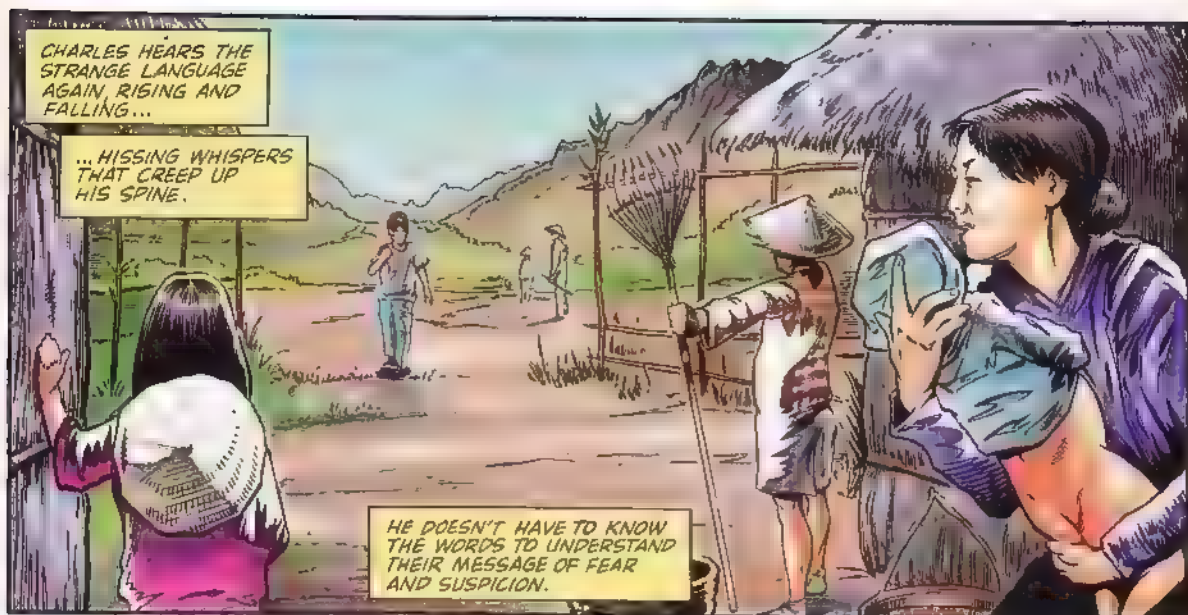
BACK HOME...



IT DOESN'T SEEM THAT FAR...

...TIL YOU START TO THINK ABOUT IT.

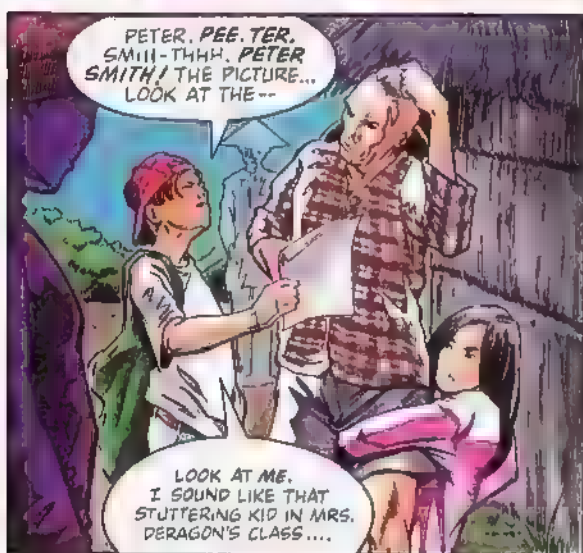




CHARLES HEARS THE STRANGE LANGUAGE AGAIN, RISING AND FALLING...

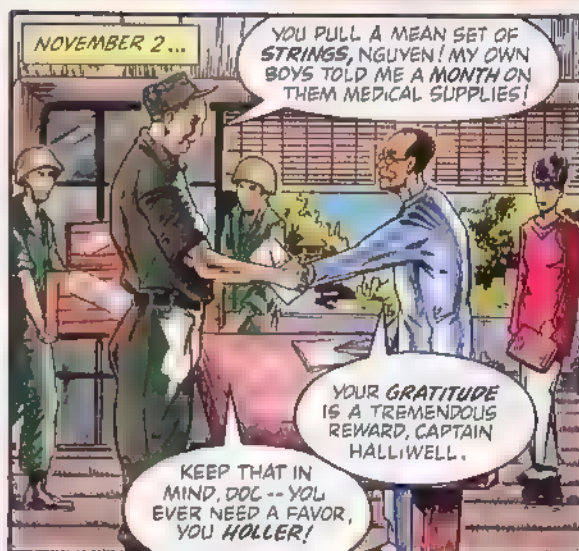
...HISSING WHISPERS THAT CREEP UP HIS SPINE.

HE DOESN'T HAVE TO KNOW THE WORDS TO UNDERSTAND THEIR MESSAGE OF FEAR AND SUSPICION.



PETER. PEE. TER. SMIII-THHH. PETER SMITH! THE PICTURE... LOOK AT THE--

LOOK AT ME. I SOUND LIKE THAT STUTTERING KID IN MRS. DERAGON'S CLASS....

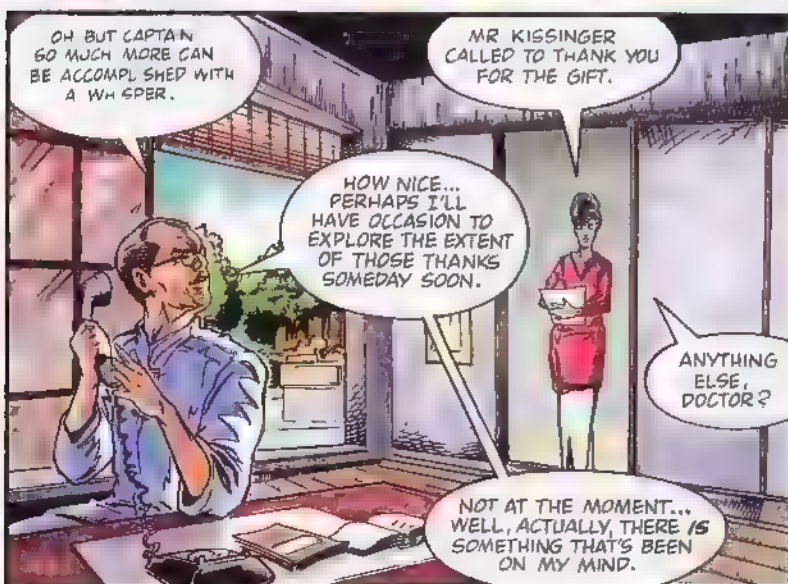


NOVEMBER 2...

YOU PULL A MEAN SET OF STRINGS, NGUYEN! MY OWN BOYS TOLD ME A MONTH ON THEM MEDICAL SUPPLIES!

YOUR GRATITUDE IS A TREMENDOUS REWARD, CAPTAIN HALLIWELL.

KEEP THAT IN MIND, DOC -- YOU EVER NEED A FAVOR, YOU HOLLER!



OH BUT CAPTAIN GO MUCH MORE CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED WITH A WHISPER.

MR KISSINGER CALLED TO THANK YOU FOR THE GIFT.

HOW NICE... PERHAPS I'LL HAVE OCCASION TO EXPLORE THE EXTENT OF THOSE THANKS SOMEDAY SOON.

ANYTHING ELSE, DOCTOR?

NOT AT THE MOMENT... WELL, ACTUALLY, THERE IS SOMETHING THAT'S BEEN ON MY MIND.

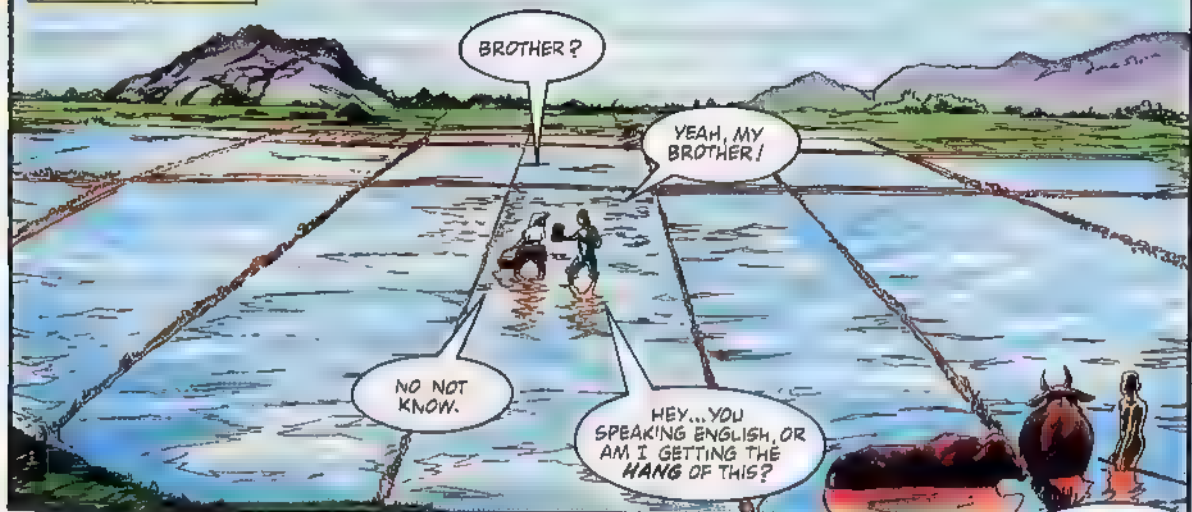


IT'S NOT A PRIORITY, TRUNG, BUT PUT A WORD TO OUR PEOPLE.

SEE WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY ABOUT AN AMERICAN M.I.A. OR POW. HIS NAME IS PETER SMITH....



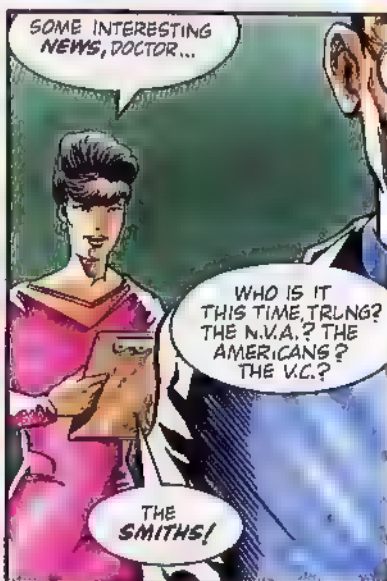
JANUARY 15, 1974...



APRIL 3...



SOME INTERESTING NEWS, DOCTOR...



OUR PEOPLE REPORTED THE OLDER BROTHER ALIVE -- THEY'RE FINDING OUT WHERE! AND THE LITTLE ONE'S LUCK CONTINUES TO HOLD!



SEPTEMBER 9 ..





OCTOBER 25...

YOU EVER GIVE ANY THOUGHT TO THAT KID, DOC?

"KID," GERALD?  
COULD YOU BE A LITTLE MORE VAGUE?

'BOUT A YEAR AGO.  
THE ONE LOOKING FOR HIS BROTHER.  
YOU SPOOKED HIM INTO RUNNING  
OFF WITH MY STORY.

HMM, YOUNG  
MASTER SMITH,

WHAT WOULD YOU  
SAY IF I TOLD YOU  
I'D BEEN KEEPING  
INCREASINGLY CLOSE  
TABS ON THE BOY...

... AND THAT HE  
HAS NOT ONLY SURVIVED,  
BUT MADE *PROGRESS* IN  
HIS UNDERTAKING?

I'D SAY  
*BLUFFING'S* MORE  
SUITED TO POKER  
THAN CHESS.

CHECK.

LOOKING BACK  
I MUST ADMIT  
TO *REGRETTING*  
MY TREATMENT  
OF THE CHILD.

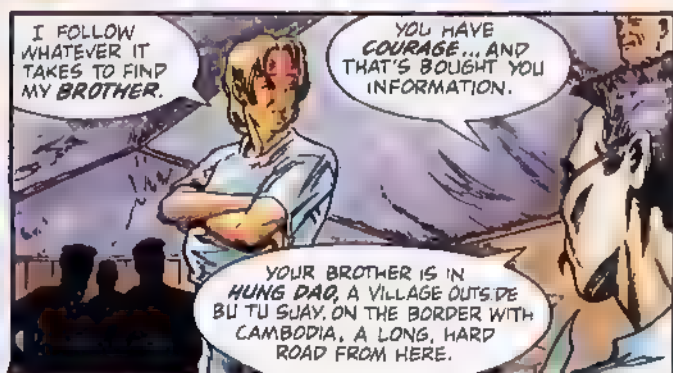
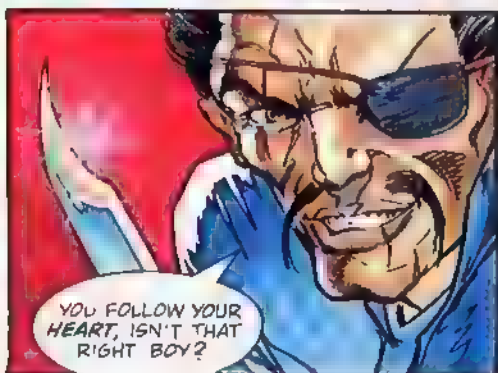
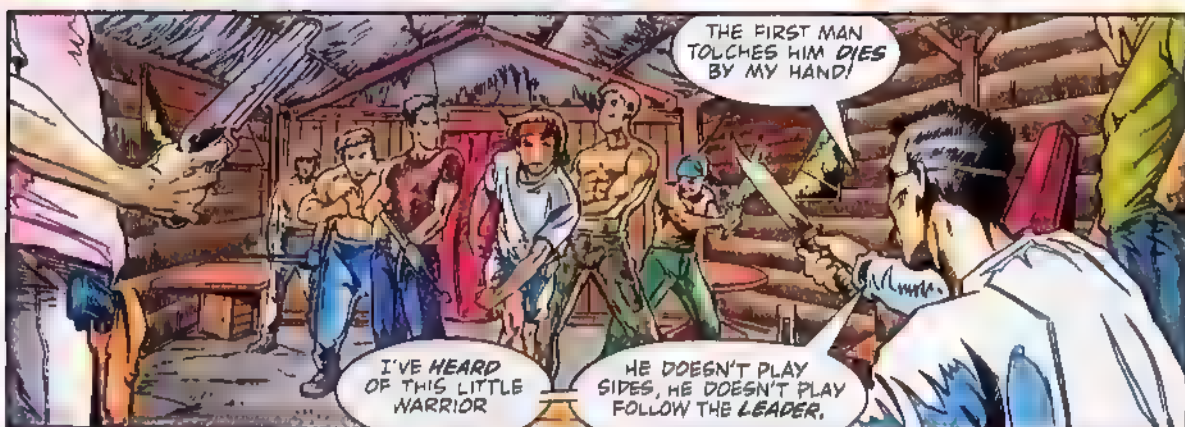
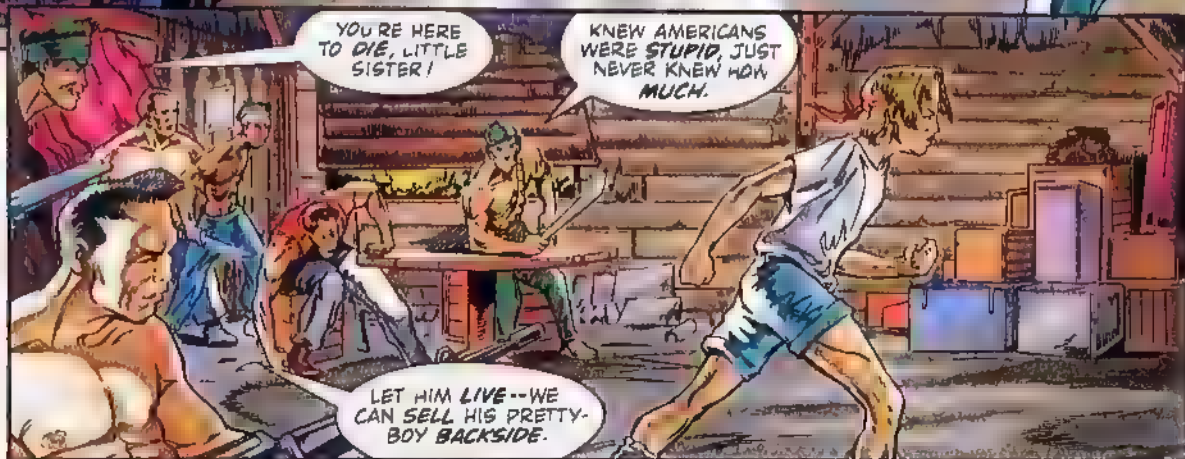
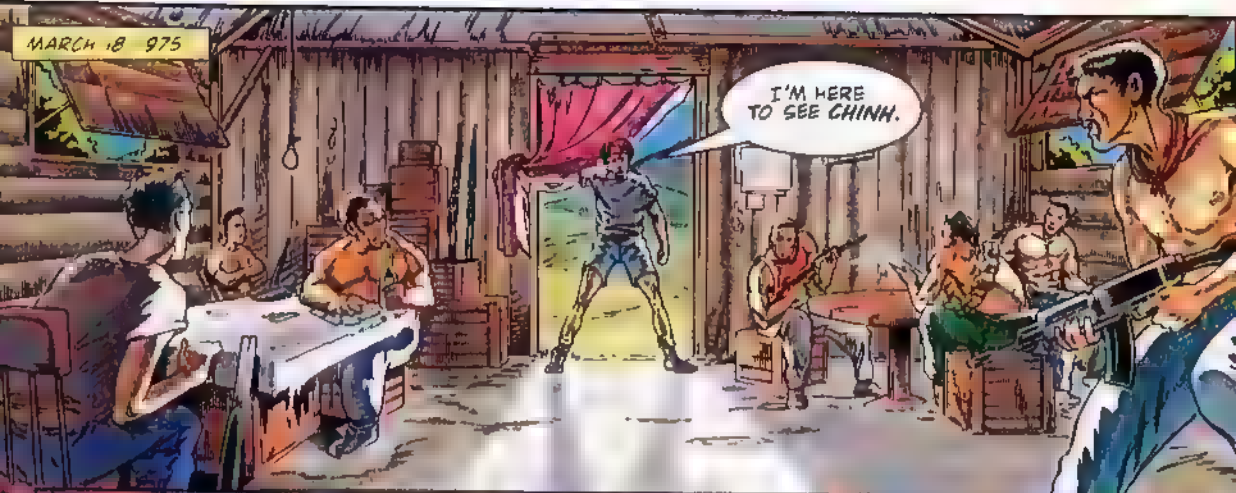
HIS VENTURE  
WAS *PURE*, AND  
DESERVED TO BE  
REWARDED IN  
TURN.

NOW YOU COME  
AROUND, AFTER MY  
*HEADLINE'S* LONG S NCE  
GOTTEN INTIMATE WITH  
A BOUNCING BETTY  
MINE!

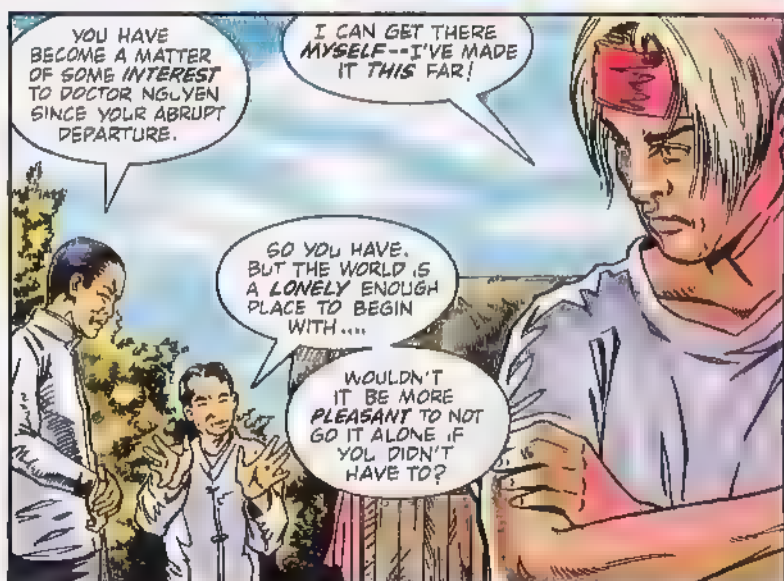
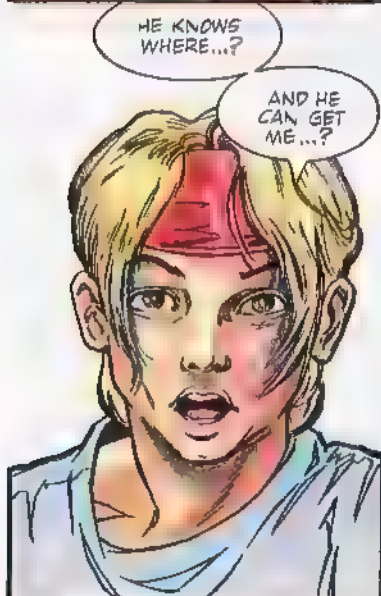
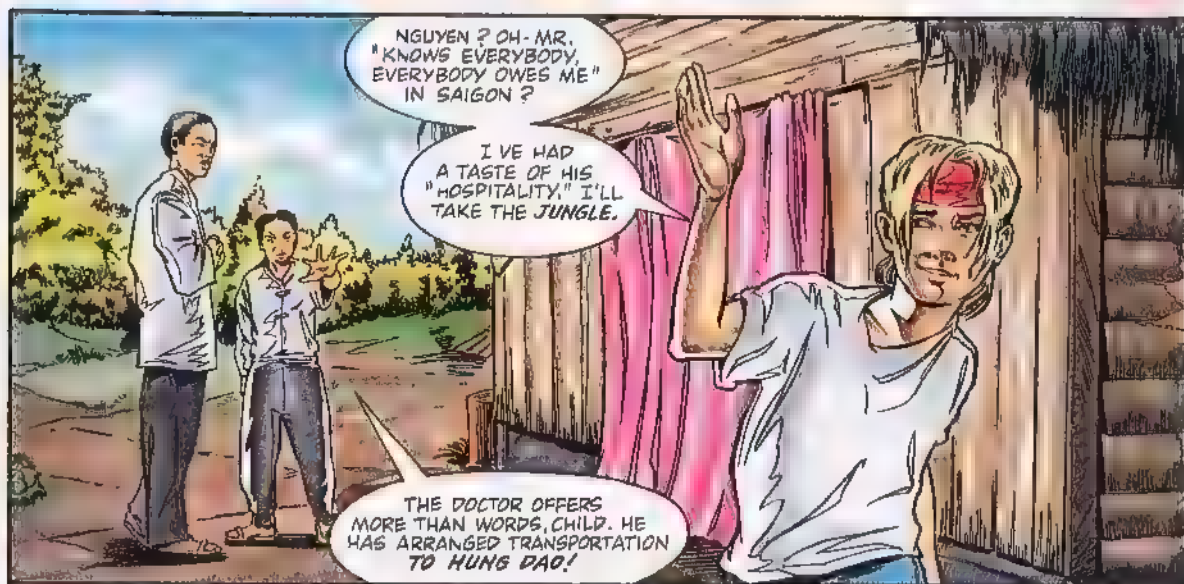
DO NOT BE SO  
CERTAIN OF MR.  
SMITH'S FATE,  
GERALD.

OH.  
CHECKMATE.











SAIGON...

THANK YOU FOR COMING. IT IS TRULY A DELIGHT TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

NOT AT ALL, "MASTER SMITH." I'VE DECIDED ON A NEW, MORE APPROPRIATE, NAME FOR YOU...

CHARLEMAGNE!

WHAT?

"CHARLES THE GREAT," FRANKISH MONARCH OF THE NINTH CENTURY, AND A WELL-DESERVED TITLE, GIVEN YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

ARE YOU MAKING FUN OF ME?

I HOPE YOU'RE NOT GOING TO START WITH THAT "MASTER SMITH" STUFF AGAIN!

NO. I AM ATTEMPTING TO MAKE UP FOR MY ACTIONS SO MANY MONTHS AGO. THEY WERE SHORTSIGHTED...

...AND BLINDED TO THE MAN BEHIND THE BOY.

I'M HAVING A PARTY TONIGHT--DIPLOMATS AND POWER BROKERS I PLAY OFF ONE ANOTHER! WHY NOT COME?

I JUST WANT TO GET TO MY BROTHER.

THAT HAS BEEN ARRANGED FOR FIRST LIGHT. ENJOY TONIGHT'S FESTIVITIES!

CALL IT AN EARLY CELEBRATION FOR YOUR REUNION WITH YOUR BROTHER!

I'VE BEEN OUT THERE TOO LONG, DOC.

I DON'T CELEBRATE ANYTHING TILL IT'S IN MY HAND.



THAT EVENING...

HER NAME IS LE XUAN.  
LIKE SO MANY HERE, HER  
LIFE HAS BEEN TOUCHED  
BY DOC NGUYEN...

BUT LE XUAN'S COMMON  
GROUND WITH THE OTHER  
PARTYGOERS ENDS THERE.  
THEIR TALK AND POSTURING  
IS THE STUFF OF ADULTS...  
POLITICS, RELIGION...

... AND THE YOUNG LADY  
NEEDS SOMETHING ELSE  
TO CATCH HER INTEREST.

YOU'RE CHARLES,  
AREN'T YOU? DOC'S  
"CHARLEMAGNE"... HE'S  
TOLD ME MUCH! I'M  
LE XUAN.

"BEAUTIFUL  
SPRING."

YOU KNOW  
MY LANGUAGE  
WELL!

HAD TO PICK  
IT UP TO GET  
THIS FAR.

YES... YOUR SEARCH  
FOR YOUR BROTHER!  
SO FOCUSED... SO  
DEDICATED!

DON'T BE. I'VE  
GRIEVED FOR THEIR  
DEATHS....

I WISH I COULD  
LOOK AT THINGS AS...  
AS POSITIVE.

I WONDER IF I  
WOULD HAVE HAD THAT  
WILL... IF... YOU SEE, MY  
THREE BROTHERS--

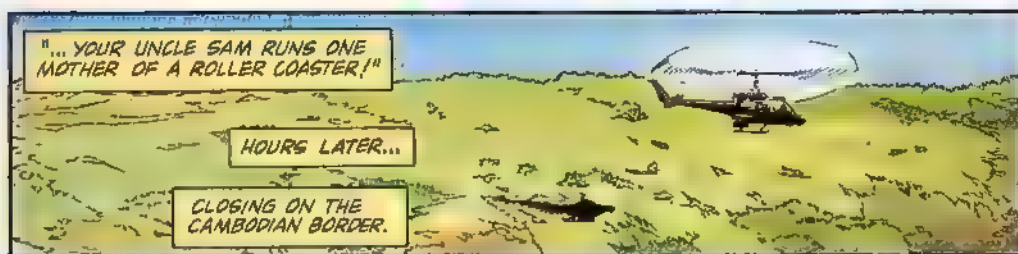
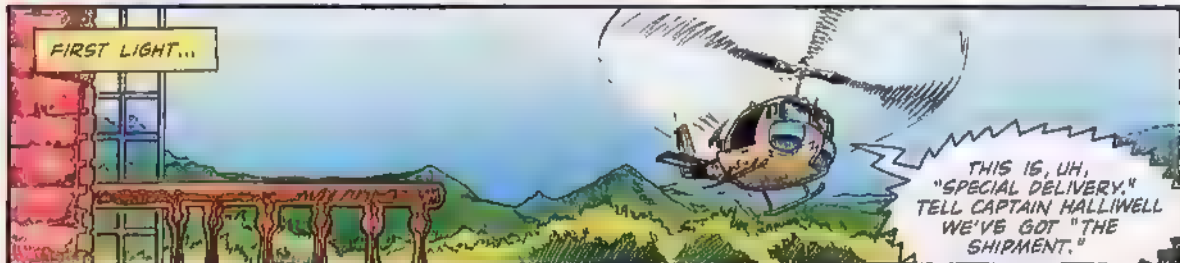
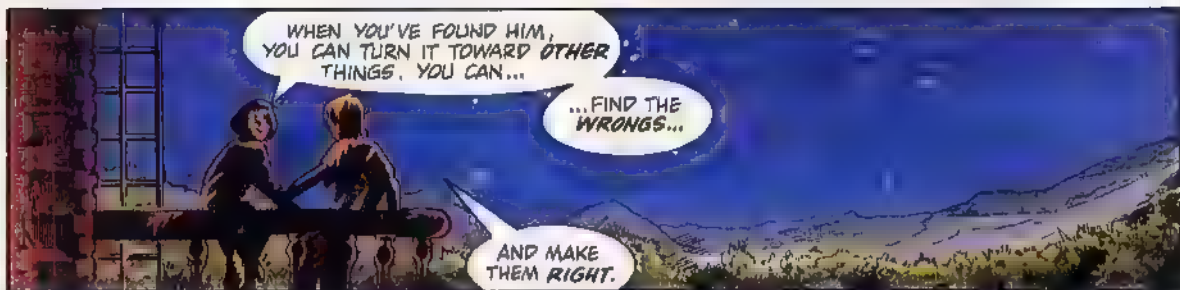
-- TAN AND NGO IN THE  
ARVN, PHAN WHO JOINED THE  
VC-- WERE KILLED. WE SAW  
THE BODIES... WHAT WAS LEFT.  
THERE WAS NO DOUBT

AND I'M  
STANDING HERE  
THINKING JUST ABOUT  
MYSELF! I'M... I'M  
SORRY FOR YOU.  
FOR THEM.

NOW IT'S  
TIME TO TURN  
TO WHAT I CAN  
BRING TO LIFE.

YOU DO. THAT  
STRENGTH INSIDE...  
THAT SPIRIT SENT YOU  
AFTER YOUR PETER

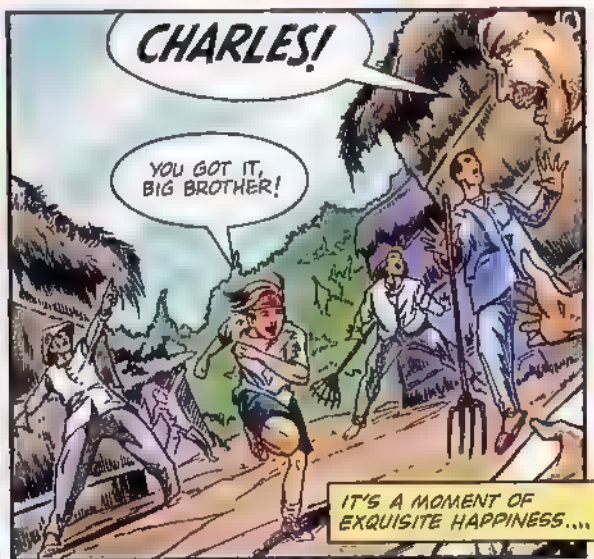
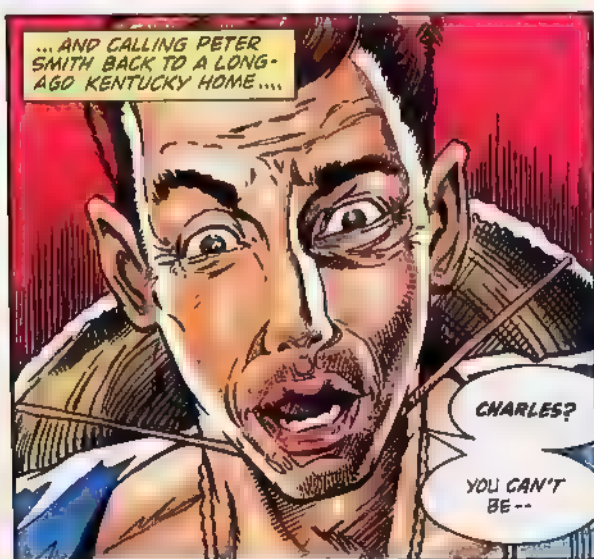
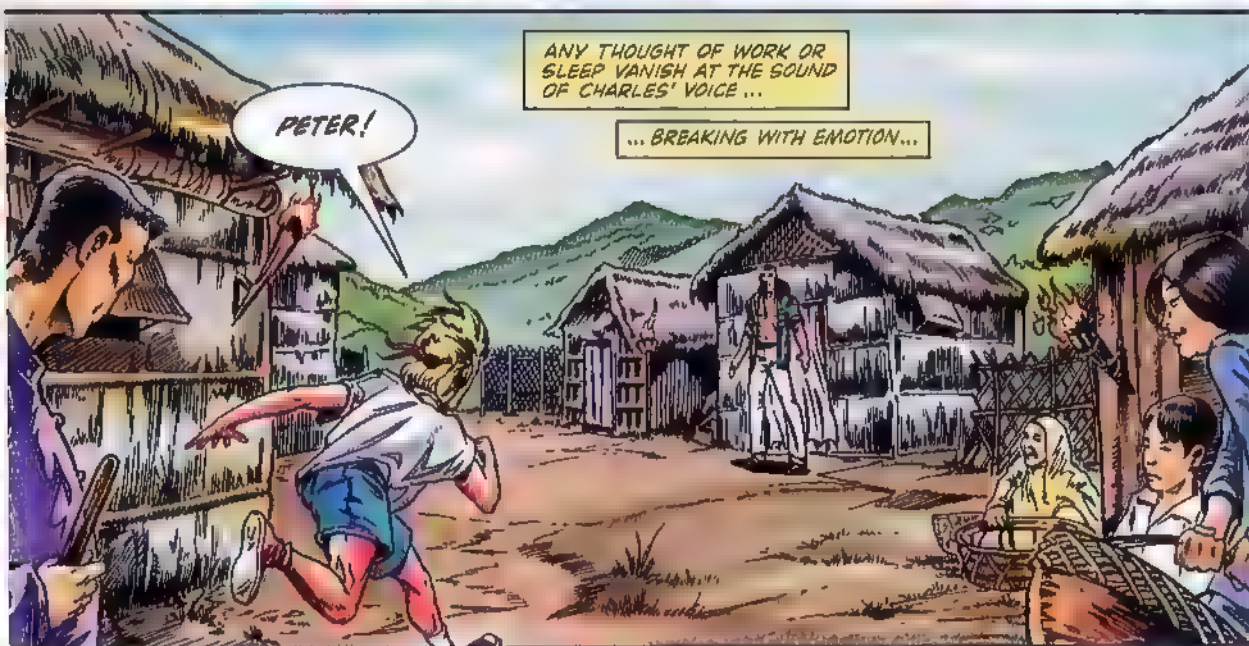














AND A MOMENT  
IS ALL THEY'LL  
EVER HAVE....

THE NATIVES  
APPEAR RESTLESS,  
GROUP LEADER.

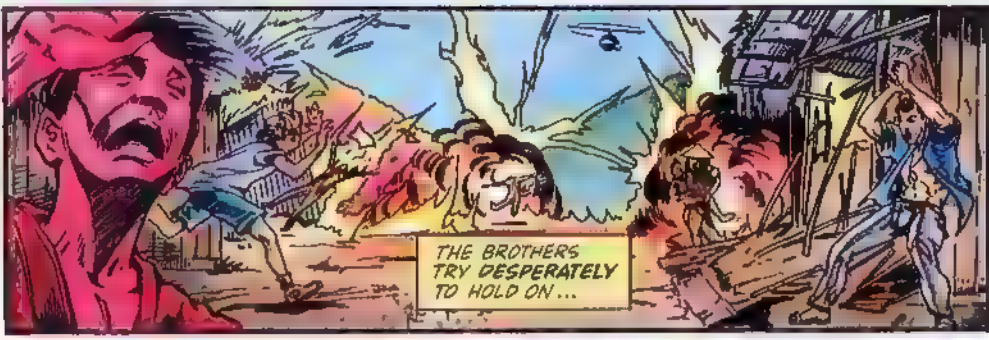
FWROOSH

BRAKA  
BRAKA

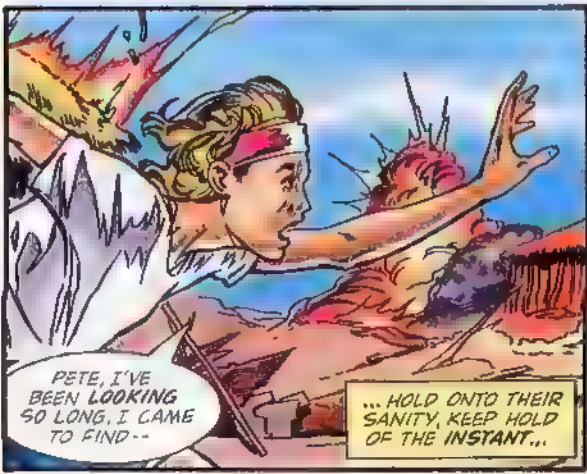
THEN LET'S GIVE  
'EM SOME O' THAT  
ETERNAL REST!

UH, ROGER  
THAT, GROUP  
LEADER.

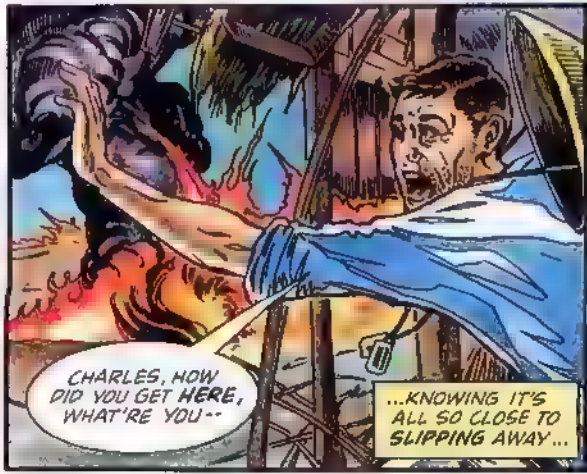
TRAKOOOM



THE BROTHERS  
TRY DESPERATELY  
TO HOLD ON ...



... HOLD ONTO THEIR  
SANITY, KEEP HOLD  
OF THE INSTANT...



...KNOWING IT'S  
ALL SO CLOSE TO  
SLIPPING AWAY...



... JUST WAITING TO  
GO UP IN SMOKE.

THUNDER AND  
LIGHTNING COME  
DOWN FROM THE  
HEAVENS...

...COURTESY A LETHAL  
LITTLE PACKAGE MARKED  
"MADE IN AMERICA."

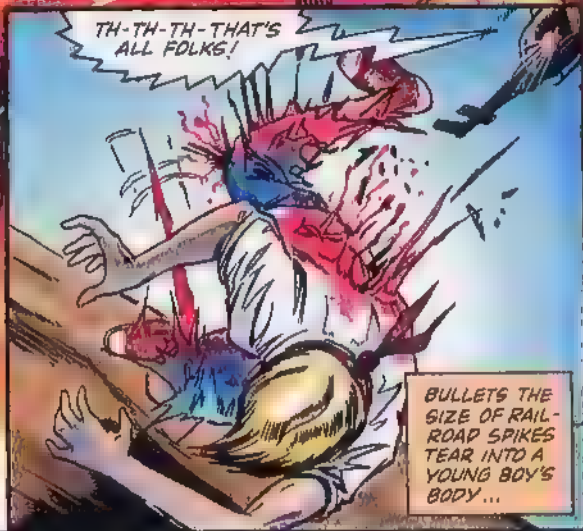


NO...



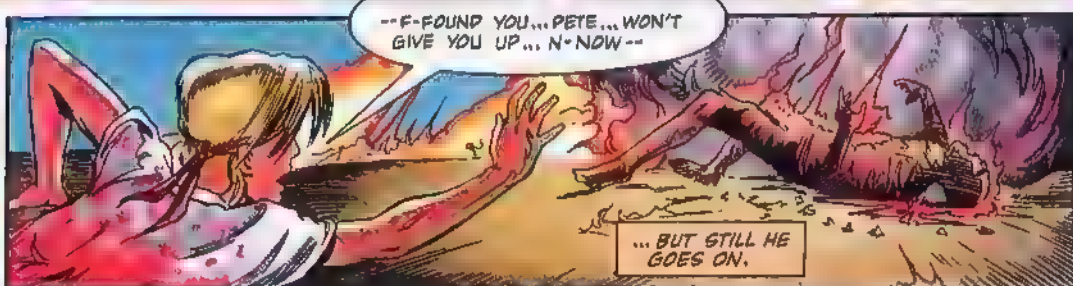
HE'S RABBITING!

--I FOUND  
YOU I KNEW  
WHERE TO LOOK  
I--



TH-TH-TH-THAT'S  
ALL FOLKS!

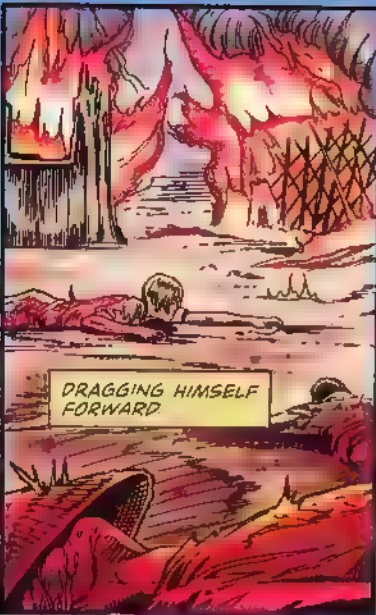
BULLETS THE  
SIZE OF RAIL-  
ROAD SPIKES  
TEAR INTO A  
YOUNG BOY'S  
BODY...



--F-FOUND YOU...PETE...WON'T  
GIVE YOU UP...N-NOW--

... BUT STILL HE  
GOES ON.





DRAGGING HIMSELF  
FORWARD.



REFUSING TO  
GIVE UP



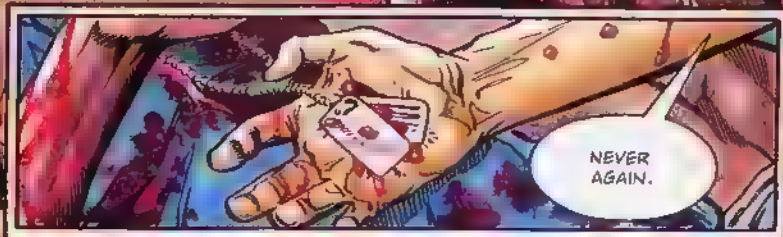
UNABLE TO STOP  
BELIEVING.

UNABLE TO ACCEPT THE  
REALITY OF A COLD HARSH  
WORLD WHEREIN SOMETHING  
LIKE THIS CAN HAPPEN...

...AND WHERE THERE'S  
NO ONE WHO CARES  
ENOUGH --

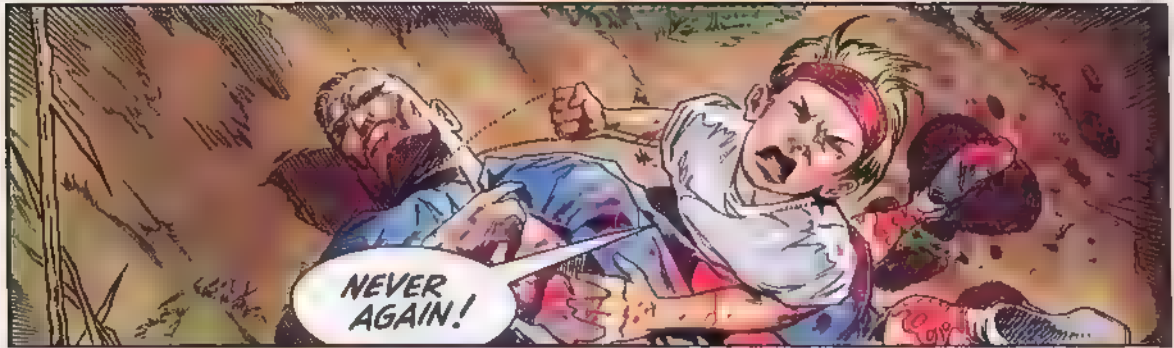
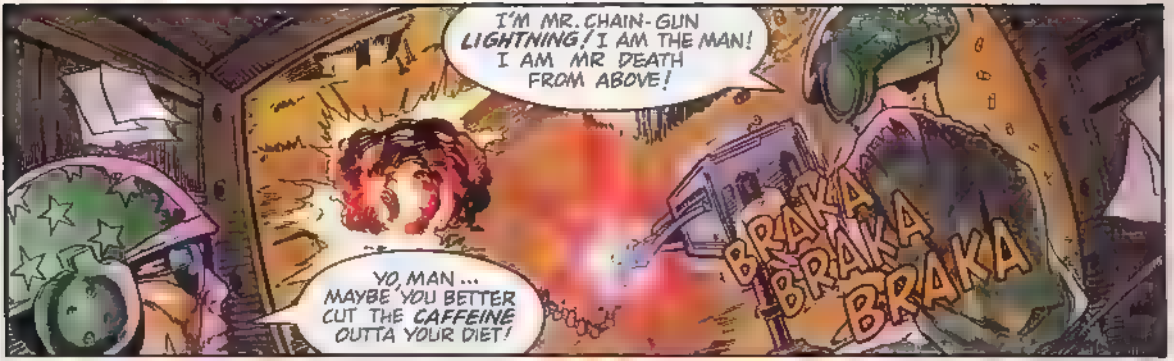
-- OR HAS POWER  
ENOUGH --

-- TO MAKE  
THINGS BETTER.

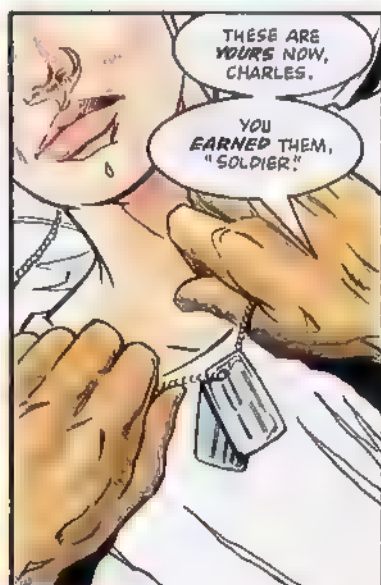
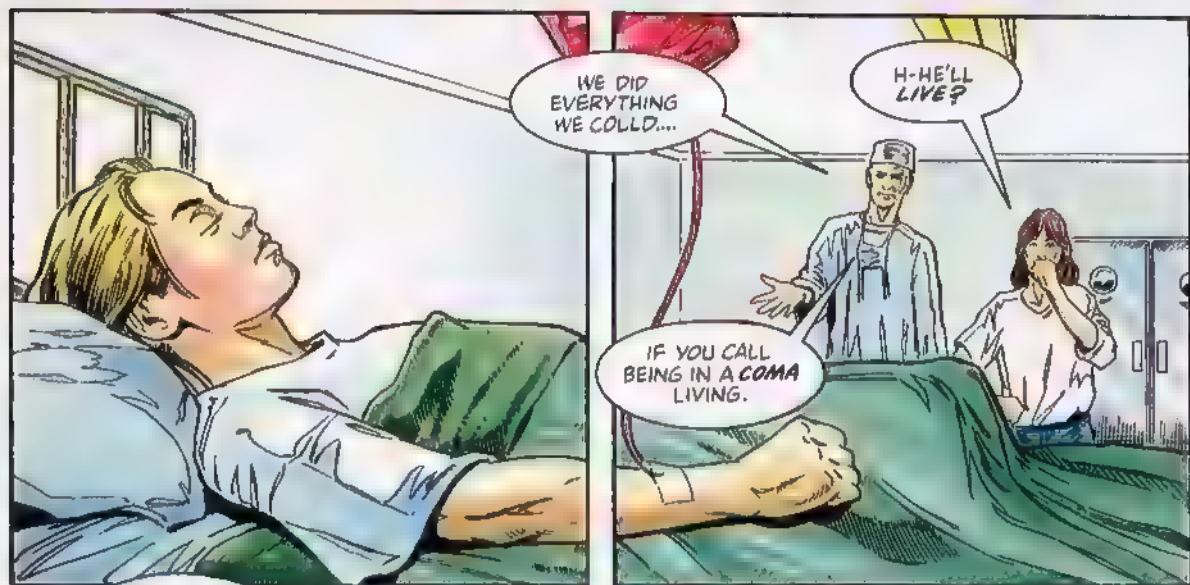
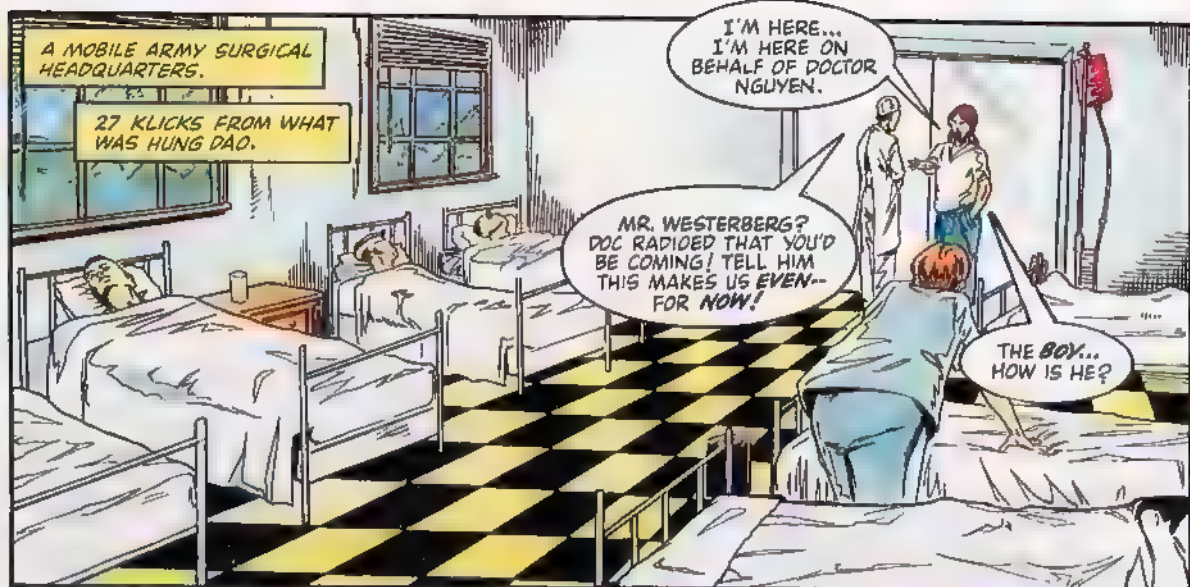


NEVER  
AGAIN.











APRIL 29, 1975...

—EVACUATING THE  
LAST AMERICAN FORCES  
FROM SAIGON! WE GO  
NOW LIVE TO—



I'M CLEARIN' OUT,  
TOO, DOC. THINGS WERE  
TOLERABLE IN-COUNTRY,  
WITH A SYSTEM I COULD  
MAKE WORK...

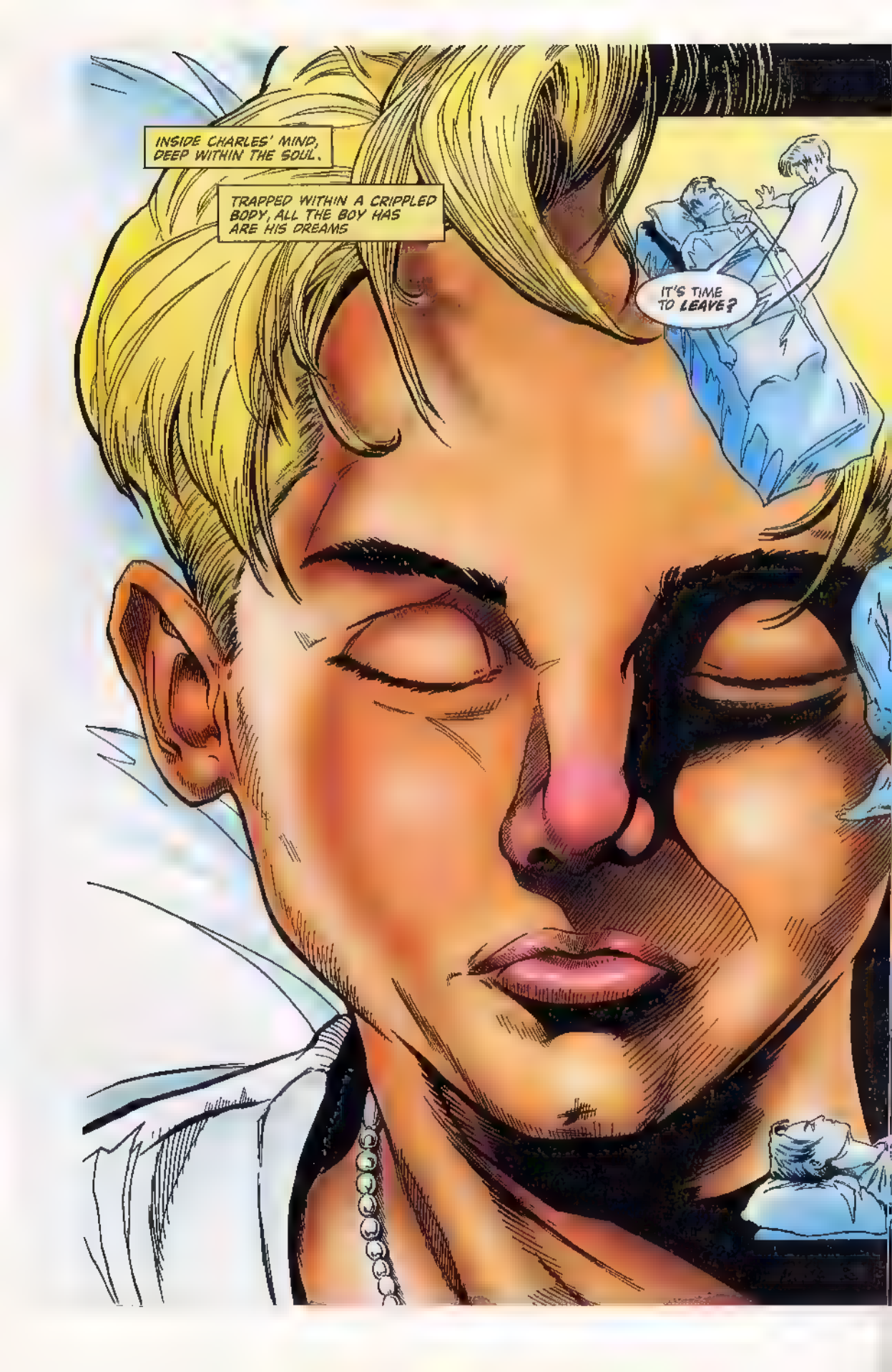
...BUT NOW IT'S  
A FREE-FOR-ALL,  
AND THAT'S TOO SCARY  
FOR MRS. WESTERBERG'S  
LITTLE BOY. I COULD  
TRY AND TAKE  
THE KID....

WITH NO PAPERS IN HIS  
NAME? NO EXPLANATIONS  
FOR HIS BEING HERE? THE  
SITUATION IS TOO DANGEROUS  
FOR HIS CONDITION.

GO HOME TO  
AMERICA, JERRY. WRITE  
YOUR HEADLINES.

CHARLEMAGNE IS  
MY RESPONSIBILITY  
NOW....



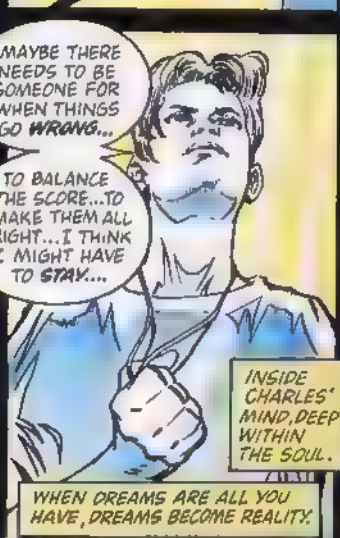
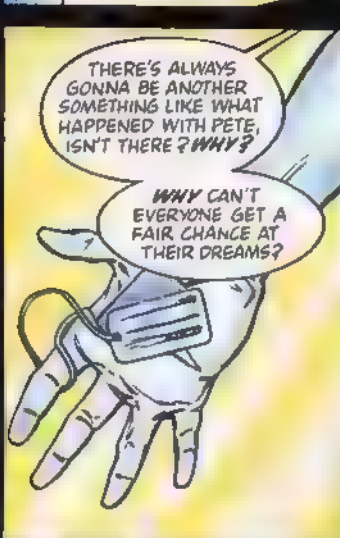
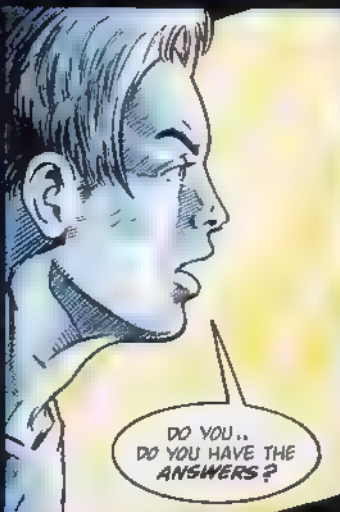


INSIDE CHARLES' MIND,  
DEEP WITHIN THE SOUL.

TRAPPED WITHIN A CRIPPLED  
BODY, ALL THE BOY HAS  
ARE HIS DREAMS

IT'S TIME  
TO LEAVE?

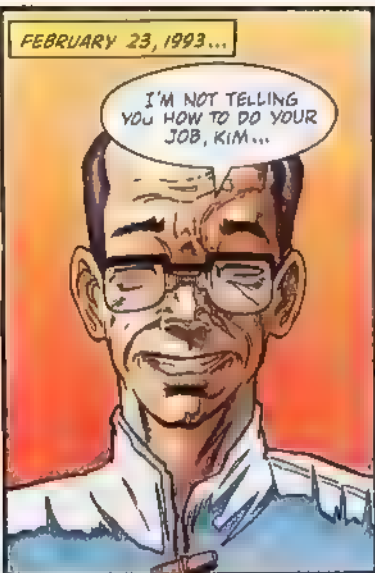






FEBRUARY 23, 1993...

I'M NOT TELLING YOU HOW TO DO YOUR JOB, KIM...



...BUT YOU'RE NEW HERE, AND CHARLEMAGNE'S CONDITION REQUIRES VERY SPECIAL TREATMENT!

I UNDERSTAND, DOCTOR NGUYEN! I'M EXERCISING HIS ARMS AND LEGS AS PART OF HIS PHYSICAL THERAPY AND--



LEGS?! YOUNG LADY, WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

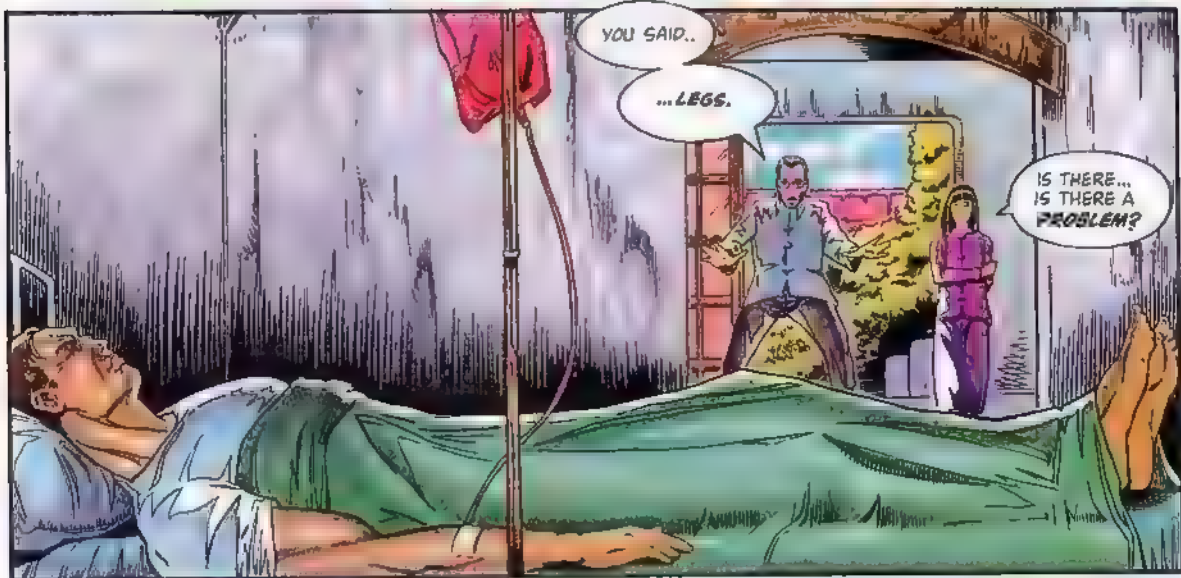
WHAT IS IT? WHAT DID I SAY?



YOU SAID..

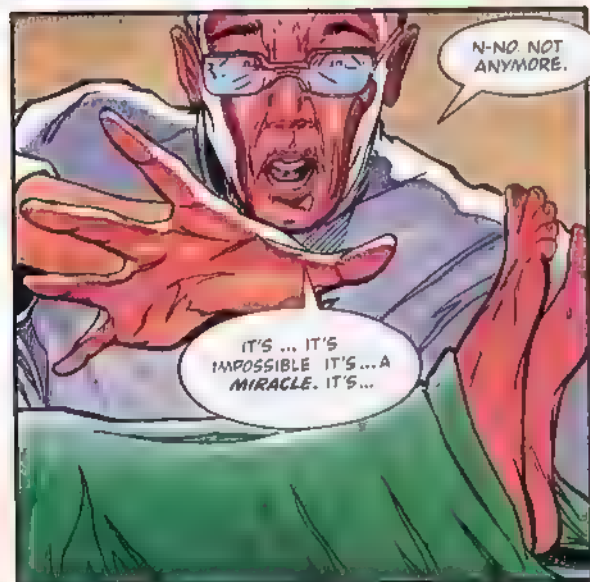
...LEGS.

IS THERE... IS THERE A PROBLEM?



N-NO NOT ANYMORE.

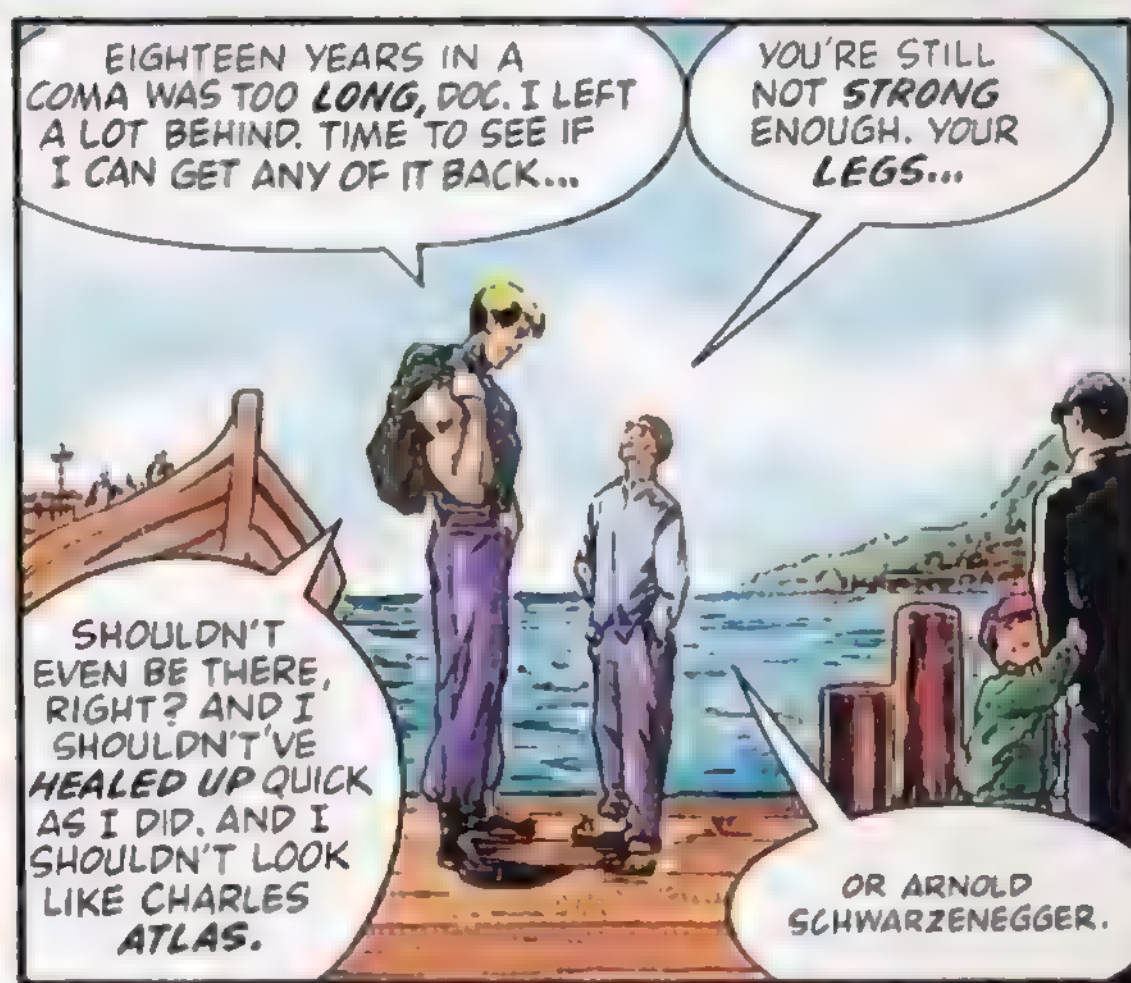
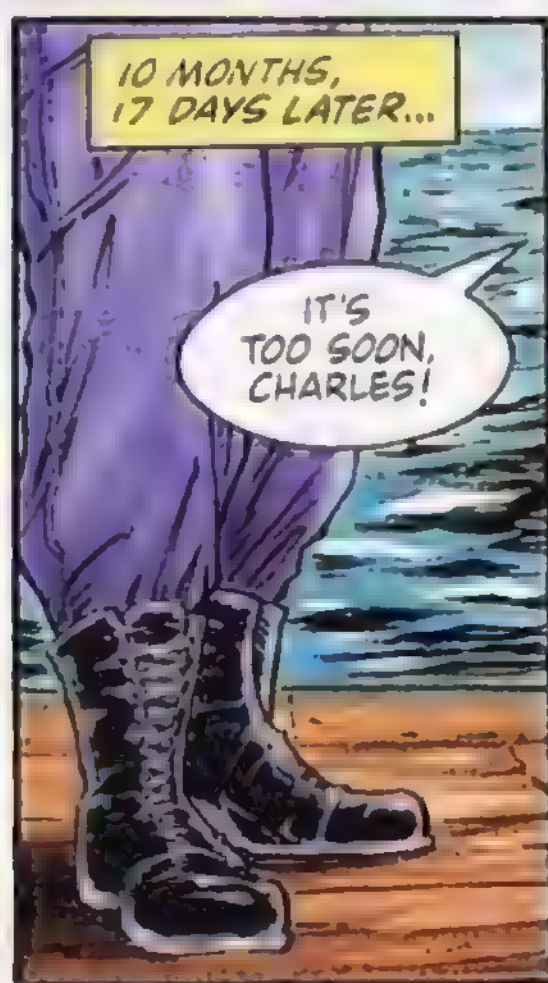
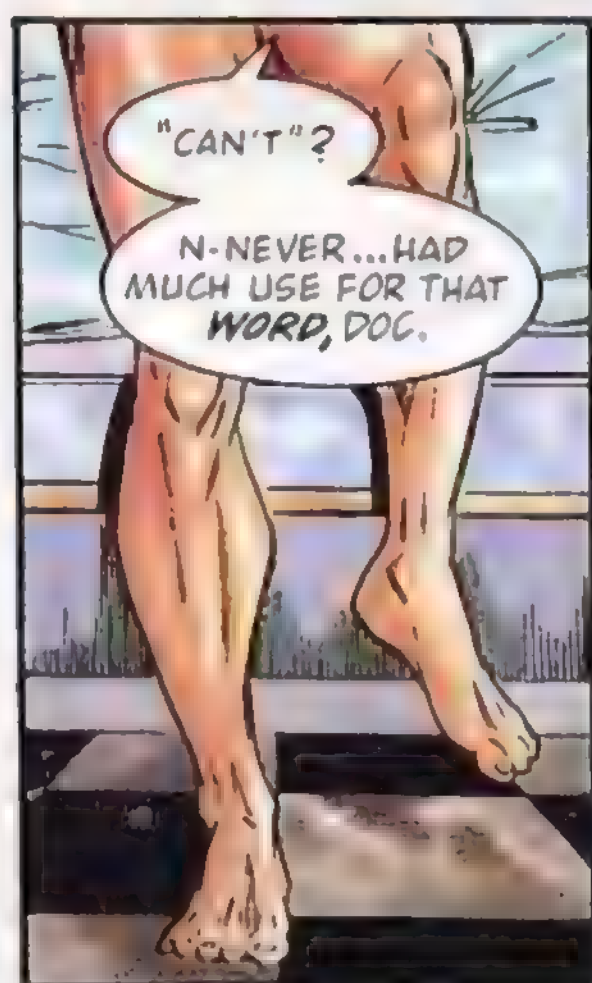
IT'S ... IT'S IMPOSSIBLE IT'S...A MIRACLE. IT'S...



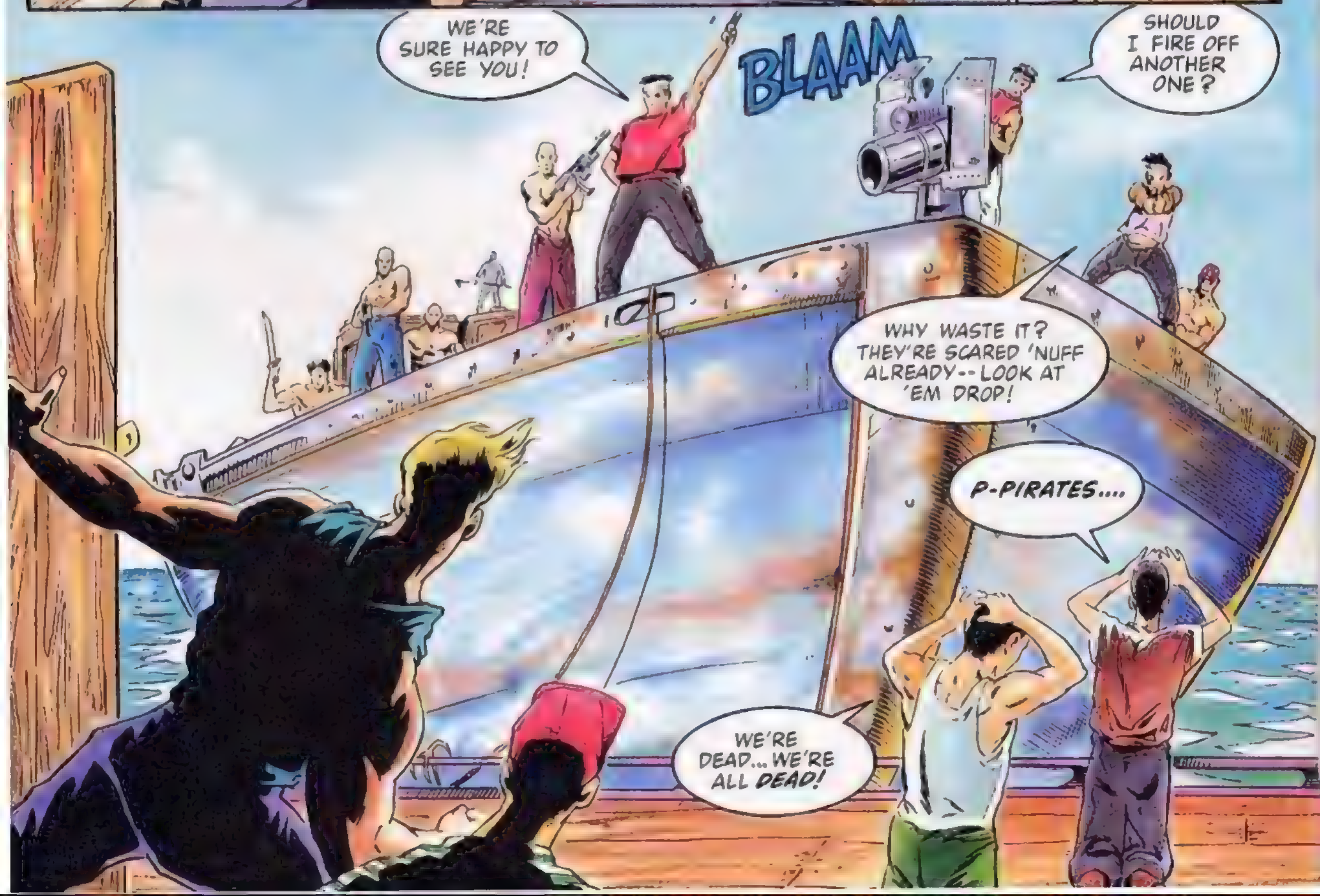
G-GOOD... TO SEE YOU... DOC.









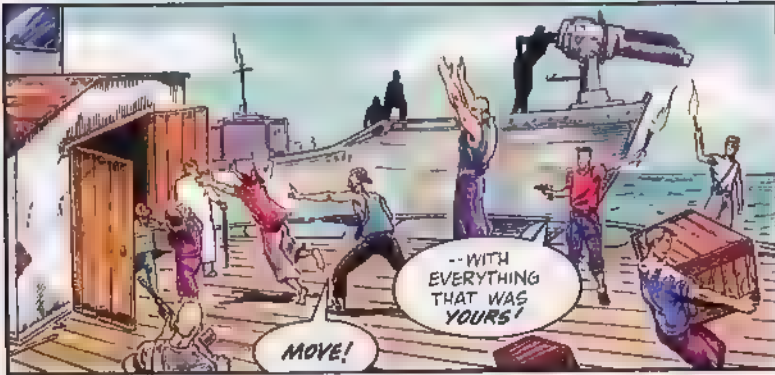






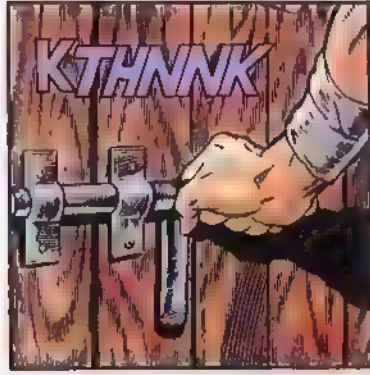
REFUGEES,  
HUH? RUNNIN'  
TO A BETTER LIFE,  
THAT IT?

WELL, WE'RE BUILDIN'  
A BETTER ONE HERE  
AN NOW--

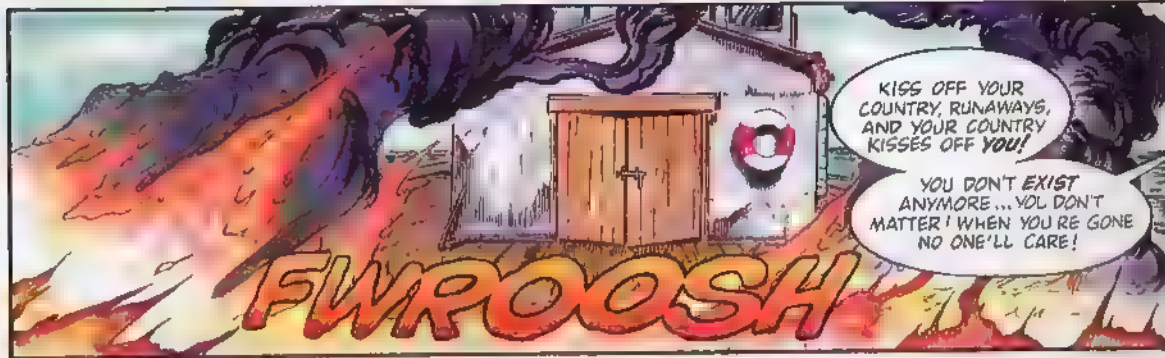


MOVE!

--WITH  
EVERYTHING  
THAT WAS  
YOURS!



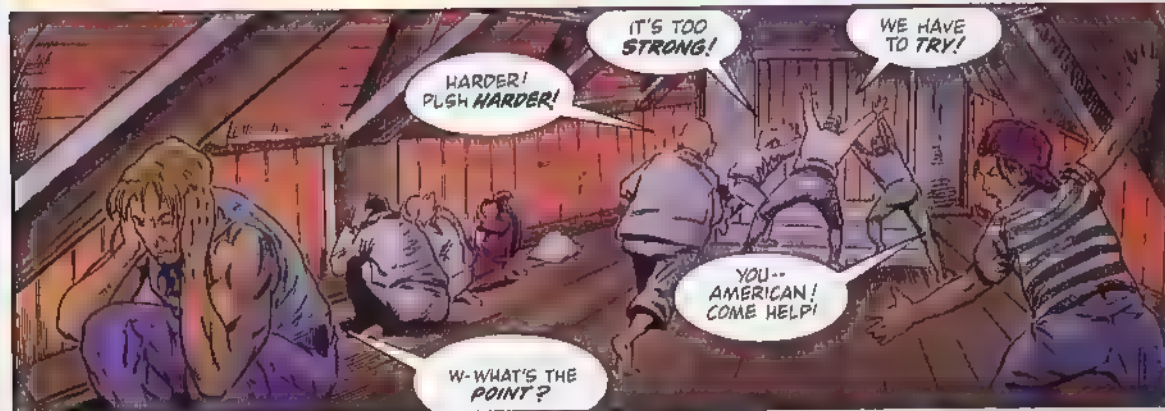
KTHNNK



KISS OFF YOUR  
COUNTRY, RUNAWAYS,  
AND YOUR COUNTRY  
KISSES OFF YOU!

YOU DON'T EXIST  
ANYMORE... YOU DON'T  
MATTER! WHEN YOU'RE GONE  
NO ONE'LL CARE!

FWROOSH



HARDER!  
PUSH HARDER!

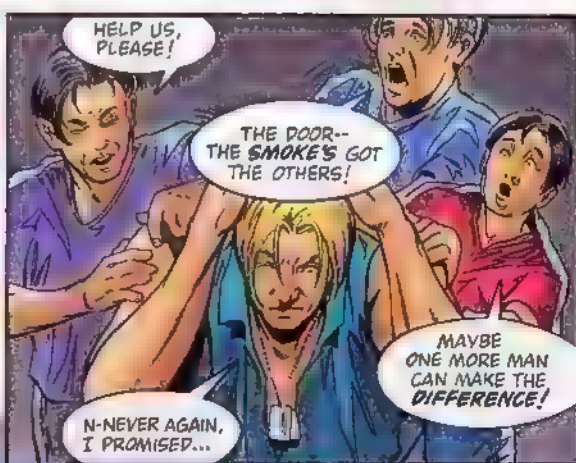
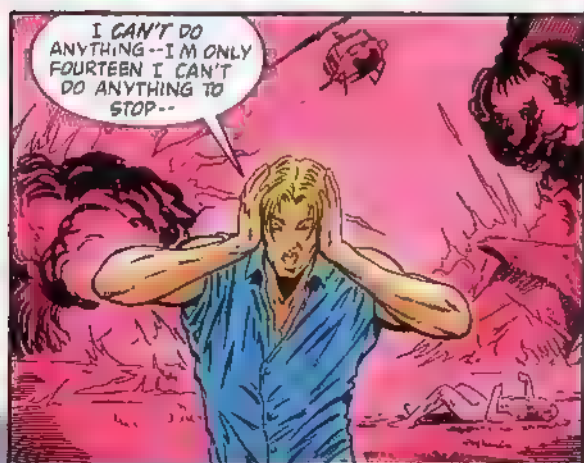
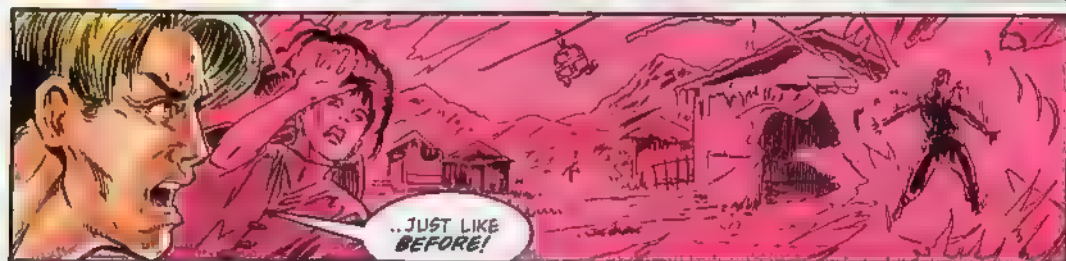
IT'S TOO  
STRONG!

WE HAVE  
TO TRY!

YOU--  
AMERICAN!  
COME HELP!

W-WHAT'S THE  
POINT?





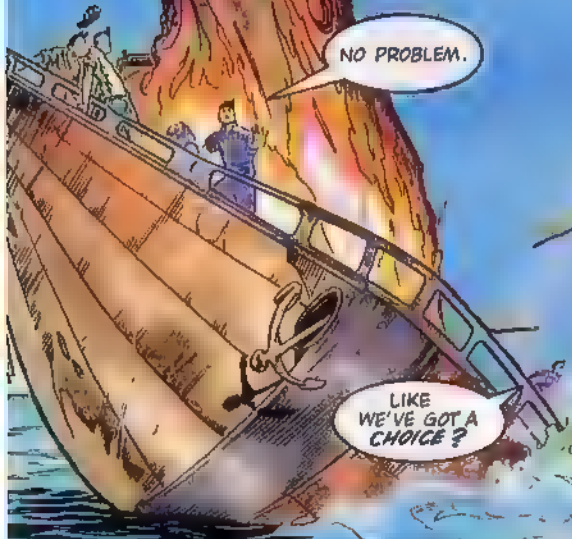
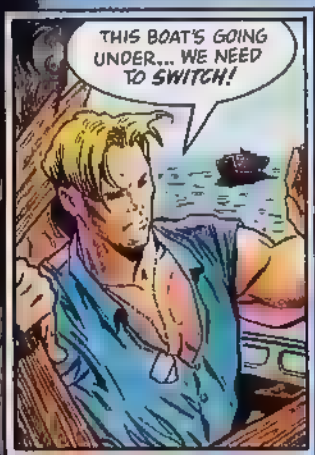


THUNDER AND  
LIGHTNING, AGAIN.

BUT NOW THEY  
EXPLODE ON THE SIDE  
OF THE RIGHTEOUS.





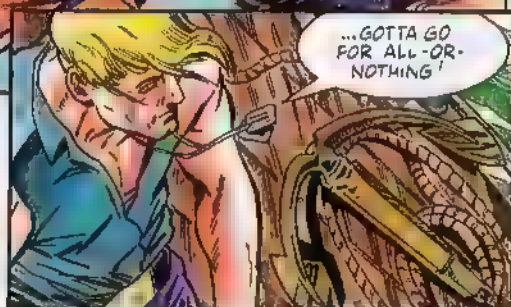


**SPLOOSH**













MUSCLES THAT COULDN'T EVEN MOVE TEN MONTHS BEFORE NOW FLEX WITH A STRENGTH AND AGILITY LIKE NOTHING ELSE ON EARTH.



HERE WE GO!



KLAANK!

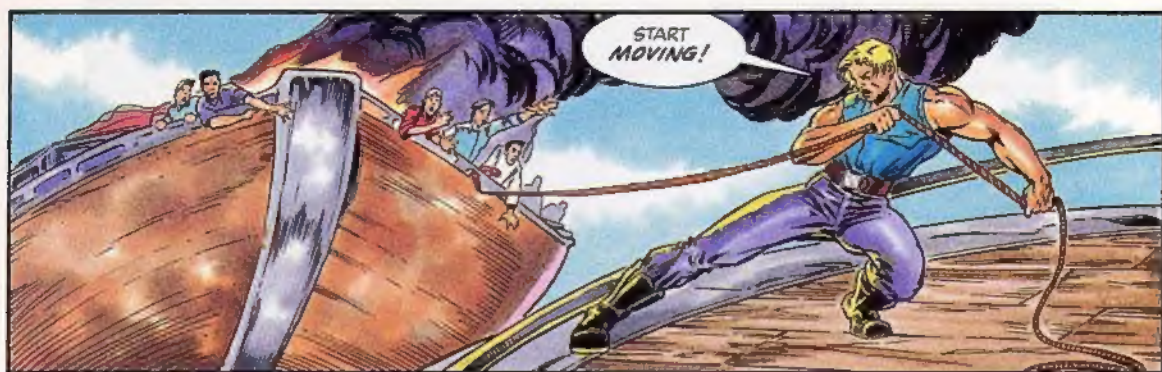


HURRY!  
THE FIRE!

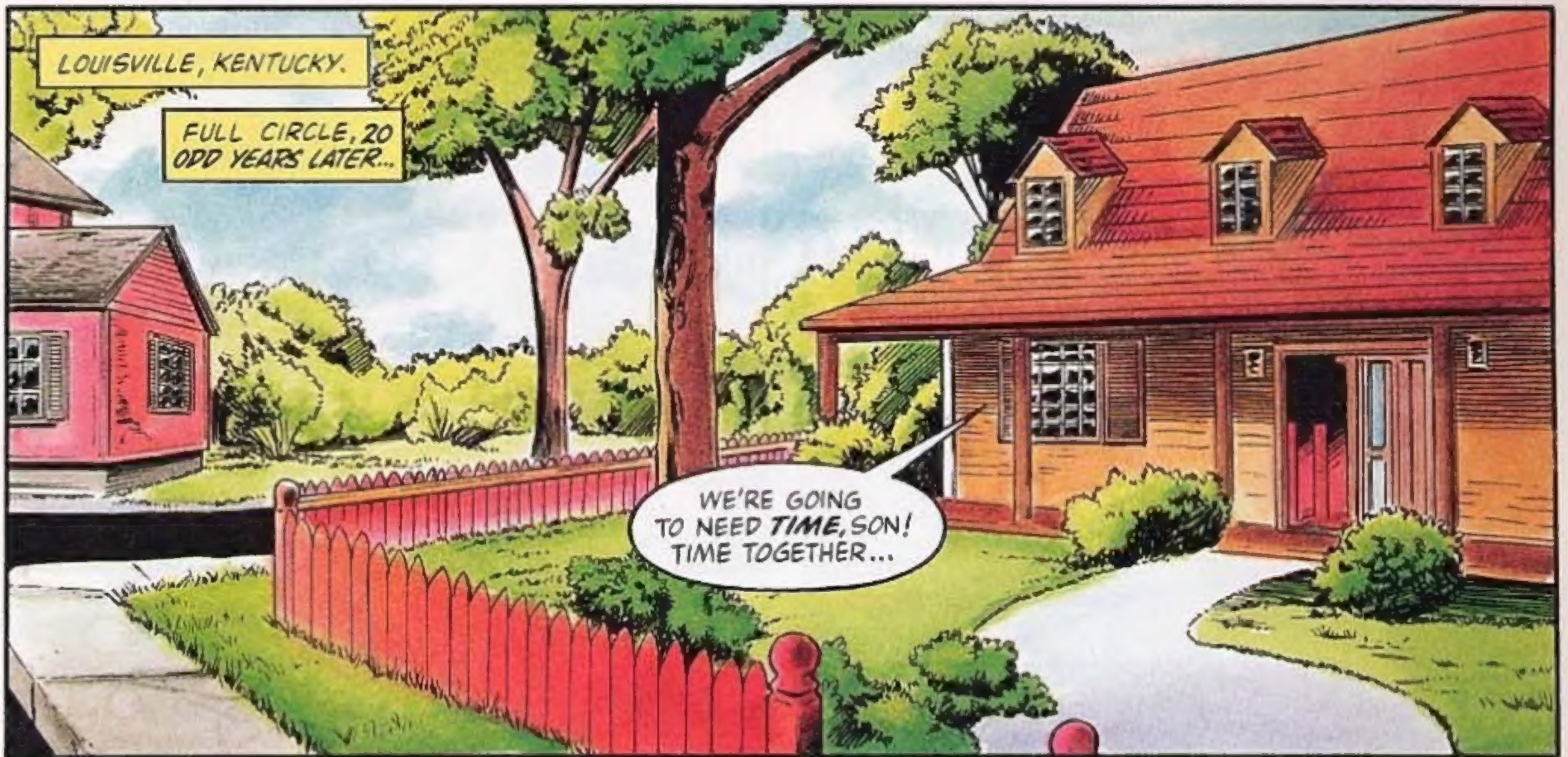
YES, I  
FEEL IT...

...OUTSIDE  
AND IN!





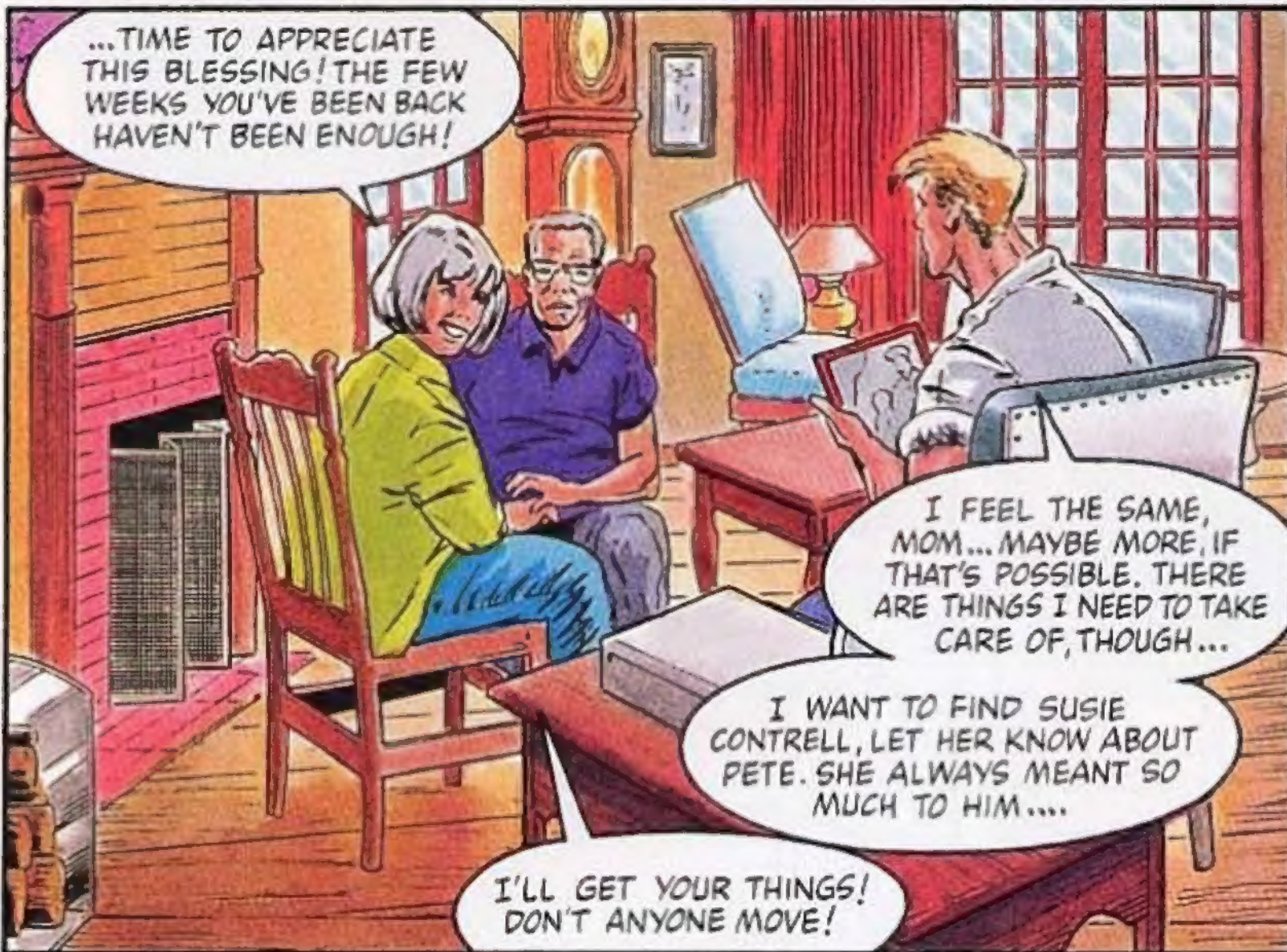




LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY.

FULL CIRCLE, 20  
ODD YEARS LATER...

WE'RE GOING  
TO NEED *TIME*, SON!  
TIME TOGETHER...



...TIME TO APPRECIATE  
THIS BLESSING! THE FEW  
WEEKS YOU'VE BEEN BACK  
HAVEN'T BEEN ENOUGH!

I FEEL THE SAME,  
MOM... MAYBE MORE, IF  
THAT'S POSSIBLE. THERE  
ARE THINGS I NEED TO TAKE  
CARE OF, THOUGH...

I WANT TO FIND SUSIE  
CONTRELL, LET HER KNOW ABOUT  
PETE. SHE ALWAYS MEANT SO  
MUCH TO HIM....

I'LL GET YOUR THINGS!  
DON'T ANYONE MOVE!

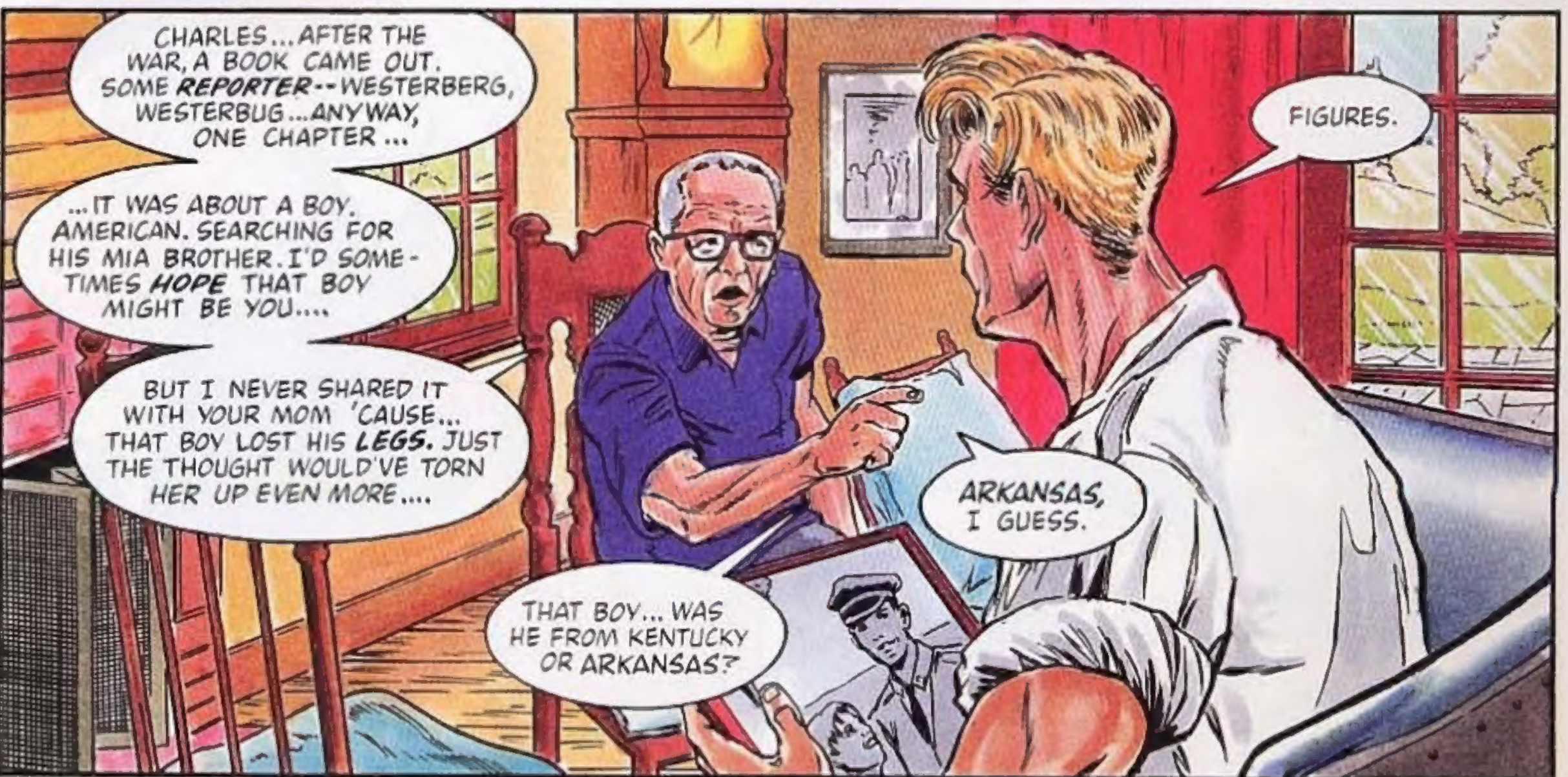


MOVE? WE  
WERENT..

I WAS BEING  
SARCASTIC.

FEMINISM?

WORSE THAN  
EVER.



CHARLES... AFTER THE  
WAR, A BOOK CAME OUT.  
SOME REPORTER-- WESTERBERG,  
WESTERBUG... ANYWAY,  
ONE CHAPTER ...

...IT WAS ABOUT A BOY.  
AMERICAN. SEARCHING FOR  
HIS MIA BROTHER. I'D SOME-  
TIMES HOPE THAT BOY  
MIGHT BE YOU....

BUT I NEVER SHARED IT  
WITH YOUR MOM 'CAUSE...  
THAT BOY LOST HIS LEGS. JUST  
THE THOUGHT WOULD'VE TORN  
HER UP EVEN MORE....

THAT BOY... WAS  
HE FROM KENTUCKY  
OR ARKANSAS?

ARKANSAS,  
I GUESS.

FIGURES.



